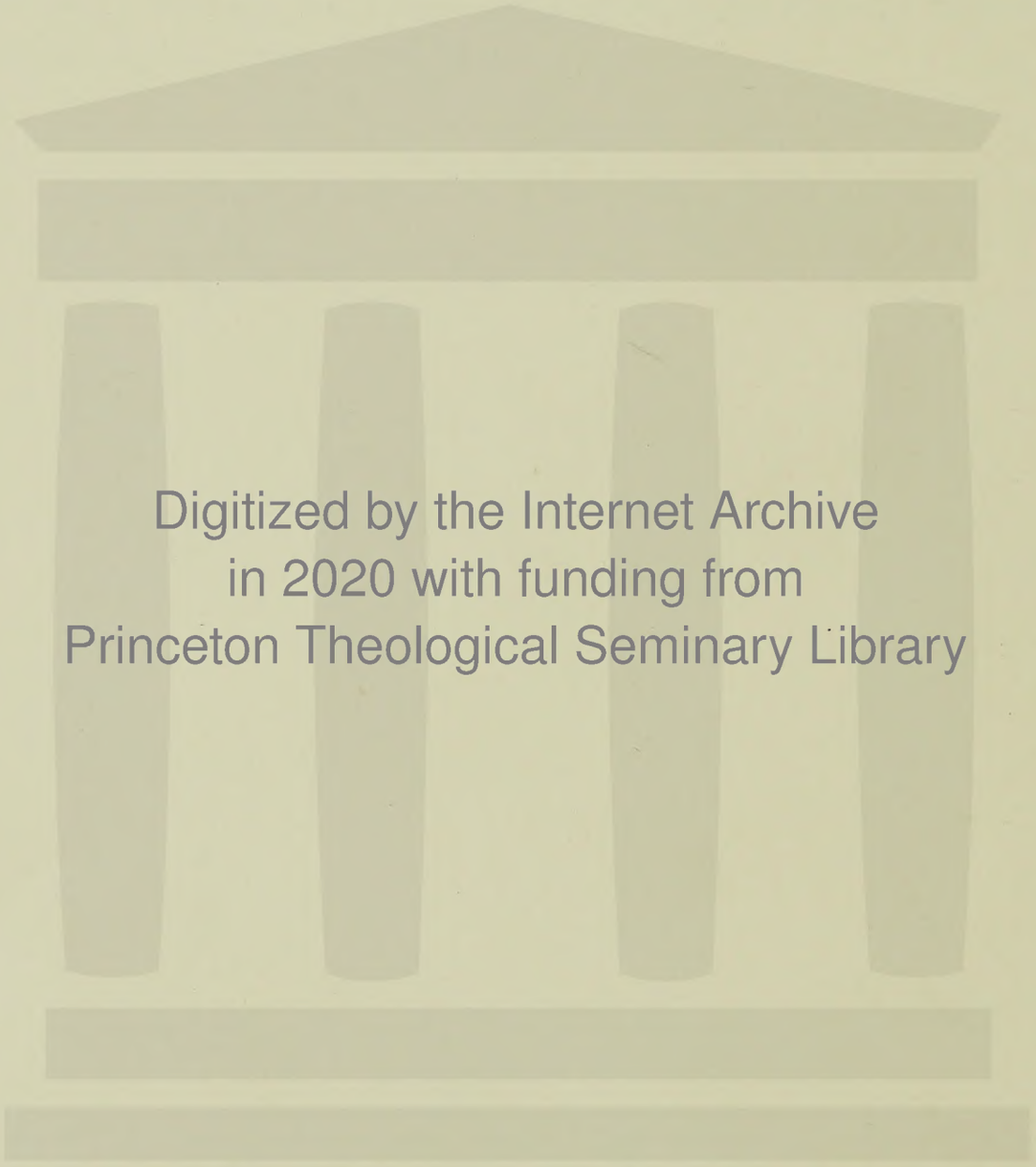

# KOINONIA

Princeton Theological Seminary
Graduate Forum

Volume II.2

Fall 1990

KOINONIA Journal was founded to promote interdisciplinary dialogue. This issue offers articles in which such dialogue takes place between philosophy and history of religions, between theology and exegesis, and between the two testaments.

True interreligious and ecumenical dialogue requires that partners take one another seriously. The three articles in this issue share an interest in an early period of interreligious interaction, whether they deal with the philosopher who describes the development of religion in biblical references, the exegete who tries to strip Pauline texts from centuries of anti-Jewish Christian triumphalist interpretation, or the Jewish-Christian community attempting to define the place and role of the Gentiles in their theology and gospel.

In *Religion in the Making*, Alfred N. Whitehead uses the history of religions to support his theory of a periodization of religions, culminating in rational religions. Although intended to be applicable to any religion, the majority of Whitehead's references are taken from both biblical testaments. Don Schweitzer and Reinhilde Ruprecht examine these, taking into consideration Whitehead's context and the state of exegesis. They come to the conclusion that Whitehead's insights need some reassessment in light of their treatment of the writings of early Christianity, the way that they link up with Old Testament writing, and especially in the field of apocalyptic thought in the Pauline tradition.

Although unplanned, the two remaining articles on New Testament themes fill in at two points where Whitehead's analysis appears weak, as he overlooks central aspects in the development of Christianity. One of the reasons for Whitehead's misrepresentation of Paul's theology is that he does not take seriously enough the impact of Jewish Christian communities in the formulation of the gospel. In his description of rational religion, Whitehead moves too quickly from the rejection of the good news proclaimed by Jesus to the preaching of the good news to the Gentiles.

In quite a different way, the article by Mark Shipp on Matthew 15:21-28 also deals with the periodization of religion. His thorough exegetical analysis of the story of Jesus and the Canaanite woman leads to a discussion of the complex question concerning the timing of the mission to the Gentiles as found in the Gospel of Matthew. His conclusions contribute to the ongoing discussion on the identity of Matthew's audience.

The dispute between Jewish and Christian ideas is even more apparent in Paul than in Matthew. The church has relied heavily on Paul's writings in the development of its doctrine and christological concepts and in many places taken over triumphalist language regarding Judaism. This has been a great obstacle in Jewish-Christian ecumenical dialogue. Such theology (if only at the subconscious level) has often influenced the exegesis of Paul. *Paul and the Torah* by Lloyd Gaston is a collection of essays that tries to avoid such presuppositions. Gaston searches for historical and exegetical arguments which reinforce the view that Paul was not anti-Jewish in his writings. Empathetic to Gaston's theological intent, Loren Stuckenbruck discusses some of the unusual exegetical conclusions of Gaston's book, drawing the reader's attention to the hermeneutical difference between the historical intention and "meaning" of a text and its "meaning" for the readers and theologies today.

— REINHILDE RUPRECHT

# KOINONIA

VOLUME II.2 • FALL 1990

## CONTENTS

# Alfred North Whitehead's View of the Bible as Evidenced by the References to Biblical Traditions in *Religion in the Making*

DON SCHWEITZER AND REINHILDE RUPRECHT

Alfred North Whitehead's Lowell Lectures of 1926—published as *Religion in the Making* (1926)—present Whitehead's developmental theory of religion. In the course of these lectures Whitehead seeks to support his theory of religion by reference to the Bible (1926:31), with thirteen direct quotes therefrom and about five indirect references to biblical passages. Whitehead's is a deceptively complex theory that seeks to understand religion as a developmental phenomenon on a number of levels, and simultaneously from different points of view. He sees religion to be a phenomenon of predominantly individual but also social historical transformation, which develops in a complex inter-relationship between human experience, response and development, and which reciprocally affects this relationship in turn. As well as describing his view of the dynamics by which religions develop or fail to do so, Whitehead also offers his own assessment of the biblical traditions and what he sees to be the central message of the Bible.

But though Whitehead quotes from or refers to most of the major biblical traditions and comments on them in turn, the casual reader comes away with only a vague sense of Whitehead's view regarding the Bible's contents. In this essay we will seek to determine more exactly what Whitehead's judgments regarding the var-

ious biblical traditions are in *Religion and the Making*, and what reasons he gives for these. By reconstructing the dynamics of his developmental theory of religion and paying close attention to his biblical references, we will show that Whitehead sees the wisdom traditions to represent the high point of religious development in the Bible in terms of the mode of thought. In terms of content, he sees the high-point to lie in the person of Jesus and the Gospel of John. In Whitehead's view these respectively represent the form and content of rationalized religion, which he sees to be the highest and most desirable form of religious development.

## I

Whitehead acknowledges that for a theory of religion to be plausible in Western culture it must be functional in relation to the biblical tradition (1926:31). Throughout *Religion In the Making* there are references to other religious traditions, but only the biblical tradition is extensively discussed. In developing his theory however, Whitehead does not begin with the biblical tradition itself. Instead he first develops general notions regarding the nature and function of religion (1926:13-18). His concern is primarily apologetic, "to consider the type of justification which is available for belief in doctrines of religion" (1926:13). To use George Lindbeck's terms, in relating religion to other forms of knowledge, primarily science, Whitehead offers an extratextual rather than an intratextual approach (Lindbeck 1986:367). For Whitehead, the understanding of the world as offered by contemporary science forms the primary text in terms of which the biblical traditions are interpreted. Within this framework, religion "brings into our consciousness that permanent side of the universe which we can care for" (1926:124). A methodological difficulty for a survey of biblical references in *Religion in the Making* is that these are mostly found in the early chapters whereas important aspects of Whitehead's theory are discussed in passages without biblical references. Therefore it will be necessary to outline his developmental theory of religion.

Whitehead sees religion to be a phenomenon of human perception and activity arising out of a complex interaction between people and their environment. According to Whitehead religion develops in stages, each stage giving rise to the possibility, but not the necessity, of the next. This development may become arrested, particularly at the stage of "uncriticized belief." Whitehead believes this to have happened in many instances (1926:28). These are not necessarily clearly demarcated stages, but rather types in which certain characteristics predominate over others.

All of the characteristics may be present in any stage of religious development to some extent, either latently or explicitly. The transition from one level to another is a product of both intuition accompanied by the development of human consciousness (1926:33) and historical and social development (1926:39f). Whitehead sums up his view of the developmental dynamics of religion as follows:

> "Religion starts from the generalization of final truths first perceived as exemplified in particular instances. These truths are amplified into a coherent system and applied to the interpretation of life. They stand or fall—like other truths—by their success in this interpretation." (1926:124)

Each successive stage in the development of religion gives rise to new experiences and insights, so that both the form of expression and the content of religion is successively reformed as higher levels of development are reached (1926:16f). Also, each new level of development that is attained provides the conditions that may lead to further development. Central to this development of religion is an increase at each successive stage in the "field of tension" between an ever more heightened sense of self and an increasingly extensive area of concern (Welker 1986:89f).

According to Whitehead, religion has four main aspects and each of these, when predominant, characterizes a different stage

of development. These characteristics are **ritual**, **emotion**, **belief** and **rationalization** (1926:18). In the earliest stage of religious development, the predominant characteristic of religion is **ritual** (1926:19f). Ritual is seen by Whitehead to develop almost spontaneously as the "outcome of superfluous energy and leisure" (1926:20). **Emotion** is at first "merely a secondary result of ritual" (1926:19), but then comes to dominate, and thus religions attain to the second stage of development. In these two early stages religion is seen by Whitehead to be as essentially a social phenomenon (1926:23), acting as an agent of social cohesion (ibid.). But when emotion becomes the dominant characteristic, religion provides the stimulus that initiates of the life of the spirit or mind (1926:21.23). This second stage, in which emotion comes to predominance, serves to "sensitize the organism" (1926:21), thus forming an important step in the possible transition to higher forms of life.

Out of the second stage may develop a new form centered around **belief** (1926:19). At this stage, according to Whitehead, consciousness begins to seek 'justification' in the sense of a conceptual framework that provides an explanation for what has been and is experienced, and a warrant for actions undertaken. Such justification at this stage of the development of religion is generally provided by a myth (1926:23f). In contradistinction to the previous two stages of religion, there is operative at this level what Whitehead calls an "incipient rationality" (1926:23), partly evident in this desire for explanation of experiences and warranting of actions. Rationality at this stage is only 'incipient' because it has not yet attained a coherent understanding of reality (1926:24f). But the beginning of rational reflection on experience and beliefs is operative here (1926:27). At the same time, "religion is still a thoroughly social phenomenon" (ibid.).

Whitehead believes that a transition takes place in the stage of belief that may lead to the development of **rationalized religion**. This transition marks a major shift, from religions that are essentially social phenomena, expressing essentially localized tribal values and interests (1926:27f), to rationalized religion. This stage is

characterized by what Whitehead calls a sense of world loyalty, the predominance of rational thought in approach, and is essentially solitary in nature. Both the heightened sense of self-consciousness differentiated from one's surroundings and the extensiveness of one's area of concern have now reached their furthest limits. At the stage of rationalization, religion becomes a matter of "solitariness" and "world-loyalty" (1926:39f.58f). In Whitehead's view, this is the highest form of religious development. The "coming of rationalism into religion" gives rise to this transition (1926:30). This is made possible by necessary cultural attainments of language and custom which allow for a requisite level of abstract thought (1926:33f). A key external influence is the exposure to other cultures (1926:39f).

It is this transition to the form of rationalized religion that interests Whitehead the most in his references to the biblical tradition. His summary view of the rise and decline of rationalized religion in the biblical and Western tradition as given in the first chapter already points out different aspects of his understanding and use of biblical texts and ideas:

> "The Bible is by far the most complete account of the coming of rationalism into religion, based on the earliest documents available. Viewed as such an account, it is only relevant to the regions between the Tigris and the Nile. It exhibits the note of progressive solitariness in the religious idea: first, types of thought generally prevalent; then protesting prophets, isolated figures of denunciation and exhortation stirring the Jewish nation; then one man, with twelve disciples, who met with almost complete national rejection; then the adaptation for popular survival of his latter doctrine by another man who, very significantly, had no first-hand contact with the original teaching. In his hands, something was added and something was lost; but fortunately the Gospels also survived." (1926:29f)

In *Religion In the Making*, Whitehead quotes thirteen different passages from the Bible, mostly just short phrases and not whole verses. Only in five cases does he give full bibliographical references: for Proverbs 1:7 and 30:7-9; Ecclesiastes 9:11; Psalm 24 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8f, each of which he quotes more extensively. He also mentions the biblical authors in three cases: the pre-exilic prophets Amos (5:21) and Hosea (6:6) as well as "St. John, the author of the Gospel" for the first epistle of John (1926:72f). In all other cases, he seems to have expected his audience to be familiar with the text from which he quotes—which at that time was justifiable, as these passages were "central quotes" and probably well known through their use in liturgy or from the lectionary.[1] Six of his direct quotes are from the New Testament and seven from the Old Testament. Three of his New Testament quotes are taken from the gospels (Matthew 7:14 and 20:16; Luke 17:21) and all are words of Jesus. Together with Whitehead's indirect references to Jesus, the life of Jesus carries quite a bit of importance in this context, likewise a lengthy indirect reference to the book of Job.

The majority of Whitehead's references to the biblical tradition occur in the context of his attempt to document and illustrate the transition he sees in the biblical tradition from the stage of belief to that of rationalized religion, outlined in the summary statement quoted above. Whitehead claims that this transition begins with the prophets and reaches its culmination in the wisdom tradition (with respect to form), in the person and sayings of Jesus and the Gospel of John (with respect to content).

Whitehead cites the prophetic movement, Amos and Hosea in particular, as examples of the introduction of rational criticism

[1] For example, Whitehead's comments (1926:54f) seem to presuppose that his listeners or readers were familiar at least with verse 8 of Psalm 24, of which he only quotes verses 1 and 10. Its annual appearance in the Advent liturgy may have led him to expect his audience to be familiar with it in some detail. He indicates familiarity with lectionaries also when referring to ". . . the habit of reading the more exciting denunciations of the prophets" (1926:53), and ". . . psalms expressing hate, psalms now generally withdrawn from public worship" (1926:55).

into religious beliefs, that leads to the reorganization and re-formulation of beliefs in terms of individual intuitions and general principles. He quotes Hosea 6:6 "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (1926:36) and Amos 5:21 "I hate, I despise your feast days" (1926:37) as examples of the admission "in principle" of rational criticism (1926:36). This admission, according to Whitehead, leads to religion centering increasingly around an objectified sense of value, distinct from social norms and customs (1926:42.47), and a growing sense of self-consciousness over against one's social group. Whitehead believes that this introduction is necessary, and that the process of rationalization must be fully carried through, for religion to continue to be a force for social progress. He believes that this rationalization has for the most part not been carried through, leaving the majority of people as a consequence in a semi-barbarous state. This failure he sees to be an exemplification of the moral of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:16. He cites: ". . . many are called, but few are chosen" (1926:38). Whitehead had reversed the latter quote in the beginning of this section to its negative form: "many were called, and all were chosen" (1926:28) to characterize earlier stages of religion that practiced social and tribal rituals.

Whitehead believes that this move away from religion at the stage of development where belief predominates—begun by the prophets with the application of rational criticism to religious practices and beliefs—culminates in the wisdom literature. Whitehead refers to it as "the reflective books" (1926:48.52). Here two important characteristics of rationalized religion emerge as dominant. These are "detachment" in attitude (1926:47) and "a conscious search after general principles" (1926:48). By "detachment" Whitehead seems to mean a Socratic freedom of thought to critically inspect and criticize social norms, that makes possible the 'search after general principles' which will hold in all situations (1926:54). In the book of Job, to which he refers but from which he does not quote, Whitehead sees an example of this process. Job's story shows the limitation of a "general principle, or dogma"

through individual and "particular circumstances to which it should apply" (1926:48). Rational criticism is here applied to an accepted answer regarding the problem of evil in a way that contrasts a "facile solution" (1926:49) with conflicting circumstances. This leads to the search for a more adequate answer in terms of the content of faith, something that the wisdom books themselves do not provide.

Whitehead cites Proverbs 30:7-9[2] and Ecclesistes 9:11[3] as further examples of religion at the stage of belief being reorganized through rational criticism into general principles valid for all occasions. According to Whitehead, if this process is carried through, it leads to religious thought becoming an expression of "incontestable general truths" (1926:52) with a minimal emotional content (1926:54). It is only thus that religion can cease to be tied to a certain social group and continue to be a progressive social force in the modern world (1926:38f).

With the virtual elimination of emotional content, religion loses its communal nature and the express intention of social reform. This is the difference that finally separates the wisdom traditions from the prophetic, for which social reform remains a passion and religion a communal phenomenon (1926:48). The continued presence of emotional content and expression is the main reason why Whitehead does not consider the Psalms[4] to represent the same stage of religious development as Proverbs and other wisdom literature (1926:54). Here, Whitehead's judgment regarding the nature of communal religion is open to serious questioning. The ambiguity of religion as a social phenomenon needs to be recog-

[2] "Two things I have required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: and give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain!" (1926:52f)

[3] "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." (1926:53)

[1] Besides the reference to Ps 24 which was already mentioned, Whitehead also quotes the phrase "My soul thirsteth to God . . ." (1926:85), an exclamation that occurs three times in the book of Psalms (Pss 42:2; 63:1 and 143:6, according to the counting of the authorized King James version).

nized, and Whitehead draws attention to this (1926:37f.43f). But a realistic philosophy of religion must also recognize the continuing transformative potential of religion as a socially constructive and symbol creating power (Baum:1975).

At this point we can summarize by saying that Whitehead finds exemplified in the wisdom tradition[5] the **form** of thought characteristic of rationalized religion. In this respect he understands this biblical tradition to represent the culmination of the process of religious development initiated by the reforming efforts of the pre-exilic prophets. In terms of **content** however, this transition did not become complete until the arrival of Jesus. This explains why at times Whitehead seems to portray the development of religion as proceeding from the prophets to Jesus (1926:30) and at other times from the prophets to the wisdom tradition (1926:48). In the wisdom tradition, the form of religious thought reaches the stage of rationalized religion.

## III

In Whitehead's view, it was not until the appearance of Jesus that the content of the religious thought of the biblical traditions became rationalized, a process continued and completed in the Gospel of John (1926:72f). In the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, Whitehead finds record of "a thoroughgoing rationalization of the Jewish religion carried through with a boundless naïveté, and motivated by a first-hand intuition into the nature of things" (1926:56). "Christ represents rationalism derived from direct intuition and divorced from dialectics" (1926:57). For Whitehead, Christ differs from the wisdom tradition in that he expresses the ideals of religious insight by incarnating them in his life, rather than by expressing them in the formulation of general principles (1926:56f). His references are mostly limited to the life of Jesus. Not surprisingly, given his ambivalent and scanty attention to Paul

[5] It should be noted that the lack of soteriological concepts within the wisdom literature gives it a less central role in Old Testament theology (cf. von Rad 1962:139).

and contempt for the doctrine of the Trinity, he lacks a theological interpretation of the cross and resurrection, though he uses the image of the "Man on the Cross" (1926:20) as an illustration of solitariness as characteristic of religion in its highest form. Whitehead finds world loyalty, as characteristic of rational religion, to be best expressed in the parables of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount. Similarly as in his comments on passages quoted from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, he sees in these speeches of Jesus a direct insight in "fact," not a "formularized thought," handed down ". . . in the lowest abstractions that language is capable of, if it is to be language at all and not the fact itself" (1926:56). According to Whitehead the preaching of the gospel as "good news" to the gentiles and their conversion is both the effect and the test of its truth (1926:138).

Whitehead's references to the gospel reports of the life of Jesus show a unity in actions and sayings; though the four gospels are only the ". . . response to it [the life of Jesus] in the minds of the first group of his disciples after the lapse of some years, with their recollections, interpretations and incipient formularizations" (1926:56). This thesis is strongly simplified and shows no sense of the complex hermeneutical processes that shaped the formation of the gospels, determined as they were by other factors in the backgrounds of the different Christian communities that first recepted these texts. When Whitehead says that: "The life of Christ is not an exhibition of over-ruling power. Its glory is for those who can discern it, and not for the world" (1926:57), he is pointing (albeit unknowingly) to different theological traditions in the gospels, such as the *Messiasgeheimnis* of Mark, the non-violent ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, or the dualism of John. Christ is seen by Whitehead to be an ideal, perhaps the "supreme ideal," who expresses in his words and person the content of rationalized religion (1926:57).

Whitehead refers to two other biblical traditions, the Johannine and apocalyptic. What Whitehead appreciates in the Johannine tradition is the conceptual expression and further refinement of Jesus' intuition of God as "father" in the phrase "God is love"

(1926:72f). Here Whitehead finds a culmination of the rationalization of the concept of God (1926:73f)[6] that renders it available as a source of religious intuition for the modern world (ibid.).[7] With the coming of Jesus and the refinement and conceptualization of what Jesus expresses the "transition from God the void to God the enemy . . . to God the companion" (1926:16f) has run its course. God is no longer worshiped and obeyed for one's own benefit, but now has appeared as an ideal to be imitated (1926:41). This parallels the culmination in terms of the development of mode of religious thought and expression that was reached in the wisdom tradition.

Unfortunately this happy state did not last for long. There soon occurred a decline, responsible in part for the loss of God in the modern world, a decline and loss which it is part of Whitehead's project to overcome.[8]

It is as a representative example of this decline that we find Whitehead's sole reference to apocalyptic and his most direct estimations of Paul and the course of development of early church doctrine. Whitehead quotes 2 Thess. 1:8f,[9] and joins to this warning of impending judgment a quote from Proverbs and Psalms "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1926:75) to illustrate the return to "the Semitic concept" of God in the development of early church doctrine.

This is probably the weakest point in Whitehead's assessment of the biblical tradition. He highlights the themes he is interested in

[6] For another example of the relation of Whitehead's theory to Johannine thought, see Laurence F. Wilmot (1979:62) who tries to show that section IV of chapter II of *Process and Reality* ("God and the World") seems to be influenced by the Gospel according to John by the (unconscious) use of a phrase from that gospel and the creation of a ". . . context of the thought of the Great Prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John."

[7] Respectfully, he refers to "St. John" (and never to "St.Paul") as the apostle and author of the Gospel according to John and the three Johannine epistles.

[8] This is suggested by the context and nature of these references in *Process and Reality* (1978:343) to Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

[9] "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"; says Paul. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (1926:75)

and which suit his theory and ignores abundant material evidence that would call it into question, or demand at least a more differentiated approach. When interpreting these passages from 2 Thessalonians and Proverbs together, Whitehead undertakes no etymological inquiry into the meaning of the term 'fear' in this context. Fear and love are simply juxtaposed here (1926:75) as opposite affectional modes and judged to be incompatible when used in reference to the same object. Within the context of the tradition from which the passage was taken, fear was seen to be one aspect of love for God, and connoted not dread but respectful awe. The polemical nature of 1 John, from which the phrase "God is love" is lifted, is also disregarded.

Ironically, Whitehead chooses here to represent Paul with a passage that speaks violently of judgement, which (according to contemporary exegesis; cf. Patte 1983:28) Paul most likely did not write, while ignoring other passages such as 1 Cor. 13, Philippians 2 or Romans 8, which are central to Christian religion and always have been attributed to Paul. His presentation of the trajectories of early Christian thought and their significance for early Christians is at best overly simplistic. Historically, Christian thinking began in an apocalyptic framework, as an effort to make sense of the tremendous fact of the resurrection (Käsemann 1969:102), which Whitehead nowhere discusses. Bernard Lonergan (1976) has shown how the development of the trinitarian notion of God can be seen as the result of a prolonged process of rational reflection on this tremendous fact of the gospel, resulting from its penetration into Hellenistic culture and encounter with Greek thought.

Nor was it simply the case that the early church was composed of "terrified" members (ibid.). More discriminating studies into the sociology of the communities from which apocalyptic expressions such as that in 2 Thessalonians arose have shown that just the opposite was the case (Meeks 1983:171f). The Christians in Pauline churches by and large lived in hope and expectation in the midst of turmoil and adversity, experiencing in this a foretaste of an answer to Job's question (Meeks 1983:190f). Whitehead is

undoubtedly correct to see apocalyptic and early church doctrine as representative of communal forms of religion. However, his failure to appreciate the positive aspects and potential of communal religion undermines his estimation of these as a decline from the heights reached in the wisdom traditions and the Gospel of John.

## IV

According to Whitehead, "rational religion emerged as a gradual transformation of the pre-existing religious forms." (1926:33). We have seen how in his references to the biblical traditions Whitehead seeks to trace therein the gradual emergence of rational religion, and then its decline. In terms of form of religious thought and expression, he sees rational religion to emerge in the wisdom traditions. In terms of content, it is finally reached in the person and sayings of Jesus, and further refined in the Gospel of John. Whitehead reads the Bible 'from the outside,' somewhat in the manner of Hegel or Bloch. He interprets the biblical materials in a very interesting but rather selective way to provide supporting documentation for his own position. Exegetically and theologically, Whitehead does severe injustice to major parts of the Old Testament and to the Pauline theology which has a significant role within the New Testament. As has been noted, his reading is open to question both in terms of the adequacy of his theory of religion and in terms of his treatment of the biblical materials. However, Whitehead's theory is extremely illuminating and suggestive in regards to the various processes of development and inter-relationships present in and between the various biblical traditions. His theory may well transcend his own use of it in assessing the various biblical traditions (Welker:390f).

In his assessment of the biblical traditions, Whitehead lacks an understanding of essential aspects of biblical theology. For example, vocation and covenant are central ideas of the Old Testament, without reference to which the inner dynamics of its development cannot fully be understood. Paul and the synoptic gospels, espe-

cially Matthew, present a view of history that differs from that presented in the Gospel of John, which Whitehead seems to prefer. His preference is based on his theoretical presuppositions, instead of on a thorough analysis of the gospel and letters attributed to John. More than Whitehead cares to admit, the prophets and Paul exhibit a strong sense of world loyalty in their understanding of the extent of the awaited salvation and its implications for life now. Their thought cannot be seen as belonging to the stage of communal religion, in the sense that it is an expression of the interests and beliefs of one people (1926:43). Nor can it be said that the desire to appease God for one's own benefit (1926:41) is characteristic of their thought. The religious faith of Paul and the prophets clearly transcends the limitations of communal religion as Whitehead defines it.

The neat dichotomy between rational religion and religion at the stage of communal belief which Whitehead sought to draw (1926:24-32) is no longer as clear as he thought it to be. Rationality is now understood to be a very contextual phenomenon, "different according to the structures of justification of the individual, community, or culture," in which it is found (Schüssler-Fiorenza:288), even more contextual than Whitehead perhaps realized.

Here is one important source of the difference between Whitehead's estimation of the biblical traditions and that central to the Christian tradition. Though Whitehead sees that religion arises from insights gained in particular experiences, he insists that religious insight must "find its verification at all temperatures" (1926:54). Like Hume, Whitehead seems to presume that, in its structure of rationality religious truth must be verifiable in terms of what is open to empirical examination at any given moment. The aspects of the wisdom tradition that Whitehead favors move in this direction, and as Michael Welker has suggested,

> "everything speaks for the view that, with those determinations, Whitehead has offered a systematic reformulation of the central experiences of the wisdom texts. However, this systematization is insufficient for the

> comprehension and accurate rendering of the traditions which are most important for Christian theology, insufficient especially for the determination of the 'tremendous fact' exhibited by the gospels." (Welker 1986:393f)

In the prophetic and apocalyptic traditions of the Old Testament, religious truth was understood to be experienced in faith and held in hope that awaited its public demonstration in the eschatological future. These traditions formed the deep thought structure for the writings of Paul and for the synoptics, and were the only basis on which the early church could comprehend the "tremendous fact" of the crucified and risen Christ. Whitehead's reading of the biblical tradition is decisively shaped by his lack of expectation that God would act in a new way in history. Thus, the structure of rationality underlying the Christian tradition was different from that which informs Whitehead's estimation of the biblical traditions, though not necessarily inferior.

A subdued but nevertheless very real belief in historical progress serves as a powerful warrant for Whitehead's extratextual reading of the biblical tradition (1925:204). Since his time this belief has become more and more tenuous (cf. Metz 1972).

Consequently, while one might agree with Whitehead that religious traditions must be related to other forms of knowledgment, one need not do so in Whitehead's thoroughly extratextual fashion. Here other knowledges form the primary texts in a conversation to which Christian religion still brings its limited but important contribution (1926:80). An adequate asessment of the biblical traditions would have to examine more closely the texts, their developmental sequence, interrelationships and contemporary significance.

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# Bread to the Dogs? Matthew 15:21-28 and Tensions in Matthew's Understanding of the Gentiles

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The story of the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28) has long held a fascination for expositors. One has only to look briefly at the history of exegesis of this text to get a clear picture of the variety of ingenious approaches that have been applied to it.

John Chrysostom understood the pericope to speak of "steadfastness of faith with persistence," particularly in the face of opposition (Bundy 1983:100). Martin Luther says the Lord "wished to test the woman's faith" (Luther 1970:54:451) and shows the woman to be an example to all Gentiles of persistent door-pounding (Luther 1970:6:262) and humility (Luther 1970:41:51). John Calvin says little about the Canaanite woman. He does mention briefly that although this account is a "prelude" to God's mercy upon all Gentiles, the time of the Gentiles had not yet come (Calvin 1845:539; 1855:54). Finally, modern treatments run the gamut from Matthew as racist (Nereparampil 1984 and Onwu 1985) to Matthew as liberator of the oppressed (Crosby 1988:199).

To what may we attribute the many different approaches to the pericope which continue to the present day? As we attempt to demonstrate below, much of the confusion may be attributed to tensions inherent in the book of Matthew and reflected in this account. The tension lies in Matthew's understanding of salvation

history and the time of Gentile inclusion. This understanding occasionally runs contrary to his presentation of Jesus' relationship to Gentiles depicted in the gospel.

The account, as presented in Matthew, is provocative for several reasons. First, Jesus appears to leave the territory of Israel after making clear to his disciples that they should not do so (Matthew 10). Second, Jesus at first refuses to talk to the woman, and then refers to her as a dog. Third, the woman concedes the inferiority of her race and then appears to outwit Jesus. Fourth, Jesus agrees to heal her daughter because of her "great faith." Furthermore, although Matthew normally abbreviates Mark's miracle stories,[1] here he expands one of them.[2]

Several questions inevitably arise. Is Jesus portrayed in Matthew's gospel as anti- or pro-Gentile? What does this account tell us about Matthew's understanding of salvation history, specifically as it relates to the point at which Gentiles may be included in the kingdom? Finally, what may we say about Matthew's understanding of the Gentile mission and the relationship between Jews and Gentiles? What position did his own community hold on these issues?

To address these issues, we will first compare the accounts in Mt 15:21-28 with Mk 7:24-30 and with Mt 8:5-13. (Mk 7:24-30 contains the only parallel account in the other gospels and Mt 8:5-13 is the closest analogy in Matthew to the account of the Canaanite woman.) Next, we will survey Matthew's attitude towards Gentiles throughout the gospel by separating and analyzing his sources to discern his overarching concerns. We will conclude with a tentative statement about Matthew's community and the occasion for the writing of the gospel.

[1] We are assuming Marcan priority. If Matthew were written first, part of the ensuing analysis would be invalid. Although the synoptic problem continues to be debated hotly, the majority of scholars continue to hold to Marcan priority. Cf. Bellinzoni 1985, Farmer 1983.

[2] Note that Matthew expands two miracle stories, while removing much of the narrative or "novelistic" aspects of his sources. We will analyze further below Mt 15:21-28 and 8:5-13, a passage that also deals with the inclusion of Gentiles.

## II. A COMPARISON OF MATTHEW 15:21-28 WITH MARK 7:24-30 AND MATTHEW 8:5-13

### A. MATTHEW 15:21-28 AND MARK 7:24-30

There are several discrepancies between the accounts in Matthew and Mark. We cannot conduct an exhaustive analysis and comparison of these texts within the confines of this article. We will focus on a few of the differences which are more significant for their interpretation.

First, Matthew uses ἀνεχώρησεν where Mark has ἀπῆλθεν. This may indicate that in Mark Jesus "*goes to*" the region of Tyre, while in Matthew Jesus "withdraws *toward*" the region of Tyre and Sidon. This would be in keeping with the statement of Jesus in Matthew that the disciples were to go nowhere among the Gentiles (Mt 10:5f; cf. Schweizer 1975:330 and McNeile 1957:230). Furthermore, in Mt 15:22 the woman "comes out" (ἐξελθοῦσα), apparently from those regions. Matthew may have intended to soften Mark's statement about Jesus' apparent stay in Tyre by mentioning nothing about the house in which Jesus and his disciples stayed (Mk 7:24) and by using somewhat ambiguous language (εἰς here may mean *to* or toward).

The matter is further complicated when Matthew introduces μέρη into the text. μέρη normally means parts, in contrast to Mark's ὅρια Τύρου (the "region of Tyre"). The woman does, in fact, come out from those regions. This may indicate that Jesus and the disciples had not left Jewish territory. There is no question, however, that Mark wishes to present Jesus as being in Gentile territory. Jesus sets up temporary residence (7:24). The woman does not come out from "those regions" but comes to Jesus, apparently at his house (7:25). And Jesus and the disciples return "through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis" (7:31)—all Gentile territories, none of which were on the way from Tyre to the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew omits virtually all of this itinerary, leaving us only with the ambiguous statement that he withdrew εἰς τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος ("into" or "toward the parts of Tyre and Sidon"). Lest we miss the point, Matthew has the woman coming out from those regions. Then, in accordance with the instructions in 10:5f, Jesus refuses to speak with her. Matthew's redaction, however, shows that he had received a tradition about Jesus' foray into Gentile lands.

This tradition sits in uneasy tension with Matthew's desire to have Jesus fulfill his own instructions in Mt 10. In fact, Matthew's entire treatment of the first part of Mark's account stands in tension with his universalistic aim in much of the rest of the gospel.[3] We will deal further with this matter in the analysis below.

Second, in Matthew, Jesus withdraws to Tyre *and Sidon* (Mark mentions only Tyre). Tyre is much closer to Jewish territory; Sidon was further north and extended to the territory of Damascus. Commentators have been quick to notice Matthew's anachronistic tendencies in his use of proper names (Schweizer 1975:330; cf. my analysis of his designation of the woman as "Canaanite" rather than Syro-Phoenician, below). Matthew's "Tyre and Sidon" may be a deliberate reference to the Old Testament pairing of these cities. The evidence is mixed for the text of Mark. ℵ, A, and B all read "Tyre and Sidon." (The 1971 edition of the RSV restored καὶ Σιδῶνος to the text.)

The Matthean text may have influenced the copying of the Marcan text. In this case, however, one wonders why the scribes did not change "Syro-Phoenician" to "Canaanite." In any event, both

[3] Cf., for example, Mt 8:5-13 ("Many will come from East and West") and the judgment scene in Mt 25:31-46 ("Before him will be gathered all the nations"). For a brilliant "solution" to the problem of the universalistic as opposed to particularistic tension in Matthew, see Jeremias 1958:55-75. Jeremias, however, deals mainly with Jesus' own conception of his ministry and not with the redactional tensions with which this paper is concerned. Cf. also Strecker 1971:108-109. Strecker says the particularism of Matthew comes from Jesus himself: "Wenn seine partikularistische Tendenz im mattäischen Zusammenhang gegenüber der Markusvorlage betont erscheint, so also als 'Wort Jesu'!" This is true, but Matthew is also interested in giving warrant for the inclusion of the Gentiles from Jesus' own earthly ministry, as we shall see further below.

Nestlé-Aland and the United Bible Societies texts suggest that Τύρου is original in Mark and that the manuscripts which add καὶ Σιδῶνος demonstrate assimilation to Matthew's text. However, because of the mixed textual evidence and the standard pairing of cities (such as Sodom and Gomorrah), one cannot conclude much about Matthew's *Tendenz* based on his mention of both cities, as some commentators have done (see Neyrey 1981:375).

Third, we are on firmer textual ground regarding the mention of the "Canaanite," rather than the "Syro-Phoenician" woman. Χαναναία is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, with no textual variants at this point. Matthew likely wishes to make a point from the tradition he has received—namely Mark—concerning Jesus' relationship to Gentiles. He does so with a term that was negatively charged historically.[4] To Matthew, the woman was not merely a Gentile, but a Canaanite. To Greeks, "Syro-Phoenician" designated the ethnicity and geographic location of the woman. To Jews, "Canaanite" carried negative religious and cultural connotations. This makes the statement about her "great faith" all the more surprising.

Fourth, the woman's first appeal to Jesus contains several interesting features. Mark recounts her appeal in indirect discourse, while Matthew has her make a direct appeal to Jesus as "Son of David." Furthermore, the words of her appeal are most interesting, particularly coming from a Gentile woman. Matthew has apparently placed upon the lips of this woman one of the most common appeals to God found in the Psalms: חָנֵּנִי יהוה, "be gracious to me," or "have mercy upon me, O Lord."

Of particular note are the occurrences of ἐλέησόν με κύριε ("be gracious to me, Lord") in the following passages in the LXX of Psalms: 6:3; 29:11; 30:10; 40:5; 50:3; 55:2; 56:2; and 122:3. One Psalm contains all the elements in the woman's first two appeals to Jesus: LXX of Ps 40, with its mention of help (40:4), mercy (40:5),

[1] There is no question of the traditional antagonism Jews felt toward "Canaanites." The Old Testament consistently presents the Canaanites in a negative light. Note, for instance, Gen 24:3; Ex 33:2; 34:11; Num 14:43; Dt 20:17; Jos 3:10; and Jos 9:1.

and healing (40:5). The importance of this quote from the Psalms is that a (representative) Gentile is appealing for help from Jesus with the same words a pious Jew would use to invoke the help of God.

These are words from the Psalms, specifically Davidic psalms, directed to David's heir and son. The addition of υἱὸς Δαυίδ to the psalmic invocation is not attested in the LXX, but is well-attested in Matthew.[5] Thus we have here a juxtaposition of the traditional words of the Psalms with Matthew's emphasis on Jesus as the messianic son of David.

All the psalms cited above are ascribed to David in the LXX (except for 122:3) and span the first two books of the psalter, of which most psalms are attributed to David.[6] Furthermore, as Jeremias (1958:51-54) has pointed out, there is ample evidence in the Psalms that the nations were invited, along with Israel, to worship Yahweh and even to request aid of Israel's God. In Psalm 46, God is called the God of all the earth, "whose peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham" (46:9f). Ps 66 is a prayer for all the nations to praise God. Ps 71 is a royal psalm invoking the nations to bring tribute to the king (the son of David). A statement concerning the function of the royal son of David who is to "deliver the needy when he calls, and the poor and him who has no helper" (71:12) follows.

Fifth, in keeping with Jesus' statement to the disciples in 10:5f that they should not go to the Gentiles or Samaritans, in Matthew Jesus remains silent. Mark does not record this silence of Jesus. Mark has Jesus responding to her immediately (7:27). This notice of Jesus' silence begins the most extensive Matthean expansion of

[5] Matthew uses this term in 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30 (twice); 21:9; and 21:15. Luke has two occurrences in one context (blind beggar, Lk 18:37-39), paralleled closely by Mark's two occurrences in the same story in Mk 10:47 and 49 (there is only one other occurrence in Mark, 12:35). The term "Son of David" is much more important in Matthew than in either Mark or Luke, particularly since most occurrences in Luke and Mark are in one parallel account.

[6] By the time of Matthew, the entire book of Psalms was considered the "Psalms of David." David was considered the motivating force and dominant figure behind them, much as Solomon was considered the author of wisdom.

the Marcan text (15:23f). There are no significant parallels to this passage in Mark. One must therefore assume either that Matthew has obtained it from a special source (M) or that he has expanded Mark's account with his own interpretive embellishments which betray his particular interests. Mark has no problem with Jewish priority vis-à-vis the gospel, but he also has no desire to make Jesus anti-Gentile. However, Matthew must have Jesus fulfill the terms of his own instructions in chapter 10. This nonresponse of Jesus begins the negative interchange with the woman (which sits uneasily within the context of Matthew's universalism, as we mention briefly above).[7]

The disciples, disturbed by the woman's clamor (κράζω), entreat Jesus to "send her away" (ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν). Daniel Patte has suggested that the disciples intended Jesus to send her away by granting her wish, much in the spirit of the unjust judge and the importunate widow (1987:221). In his view, Jesus' response is directed to the disciples rather than the woman. Patte attempts to make sense of the passage without recourse to redaction theories. However, one may accept Patte's basic interpretation of this verse while maintaining a source-critical perspective.[8]

Ἀπολύω can, in fact, mean to send someone away in the sense of dismiss. It can also mean to send someone away in the sense of releasing them or granting their request. Matthew uses this word in both senses: Jesus is continually dismissing the crowds (e.g., Mt

[7] It is difficult to determine where Matthew has added his own interpretive material and where we have the presence of a special source (M). Our analysis is in line with Legasse's assessment of Matthew's use of sources other than Mark in this pericope (1972:21). Legasse suggests that "Il est peu vraisembable que Matthieu ait utilisé une autre version, plus ancienne" along with Mark. See also Dermience 1982:45. Dermience suggests that "Il ressort que les différences entre le texte matthéen et son modèle presume sont des ameliorations littéraires ou des changements signifiants." As a rule of thumb, therefore, when one can detect tendentious concerns of the redactor, it is safer to posit an interpretive expansion rather than a special source. We shall see that Matthew's expansions here have to do precisely with his concern for Gentiles and the Gentile mission.

[8] Cf. especially G. Bornkamm's word of caution about Matthew's use of sources, (1983:85-90.) Matthew's use of his sources introduces tensions into the gospel that cannot easily be explained in a purely structural manner.

14:15). But in the parable of the unjust debtor, the lord releases the debtor by responding to his appeal and forgiving the debt (Mt 18:27).

If Patte's reading is correct, how do we explain Matthew's inclusion of this variant? This long variant begins with a δέ, disjunctive to the preceding request for aid. Verses 22 and 25 are partially paralleled by Mk 7:25, into the middle of which Matthew's long variant is inserted. Also, Mt 15:21 has a parallel in Mk 7:24 and 15:22a in Mk 7:26. All the material Matthew has borrowed from Mark (until the saying in Mt 15:26‖Mk 7:27) is "bare bones" narrative. Matthew has taken the basic outline of the story from Mark and rearranged it so all the elements of the plot and the characters are dealt with quickly at the beginning of the narrative. Into the middle of the "bare bones" report, Matthew inserts his interpretive expansion, set off by the disjunctive δε's at the beginning of 15:23 and 25. He does this to highlight the woman's Gentile nature and Jesus' initial unwillingness to deal with her.

At any rate, signs of redaction are apparent. This is further evidence that Matthew is using Mark's account (or something very like Mark), but rearranges it and inserts material of particular interest to him. This interpolation serves two functions. It places Jewish piety and messianic faith on the lips of a Gentile woman and it reiterates Jesus' conception of the objects of his ministry. This introduces a major tension into the text (Bornkamm 1983:89f).

Sixth, Mark's "let the children be fed first" has no parallel in Matthew. In the Marcan account, Jesus has no problem conversing with the woman. He is concerned merely with the chronology of her request. It was not yet the time of the Gentiles. Matthew, on the other hand, has no such softening of the harsh saying concerning the Gentiles as dogs. The statement Οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις ("It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs") may have been a popular saying or proverb. Unfortunately, we do not pos-

sess it outside of the Bible. There are, however, several extant sources available to us which do render the saying intelligible, even if they do not explain its origin or original setting.

The first is scripture itself. Ps 58:6f (LXX) calls upon God to punish the nations, portrayed as howling dogs. Second, several passages in the Mishnah, while substantially later than Matthew, may give us insight into the interchange between Jesus and the woman. *Nedarim* 4:3 and *Bekharoth* 5:6 say it is lawful to give unclean animals or clean animals torn by wild beasts to Gentiles or dogs. *Tohoroth* 8:6 contains laws for the passing on of unclean food. Here, Gentiles (perhaps) have slightly more consideration than dogs. The passage, however, is more concerned with the food than it is with the Gentile. In any case, the Mishnah provides for Gentiles to be treated at least as well as dogs, which treatment the woman is requesting. Finally, this saying may have been one the rigorous school of Hillel used in discouraging mission activity among Gentiles.

In the Marcan account, Jesus is talking about Jewish priority in hearing the gospel. Mark has no denial of Gentile access to the gospel. Mark implies that those considered Gentile dogs during Jesus' earthly ministry would secondly eat of the children's bread. Matthew has no such qualifying comment. If this analysis is correct and if such a saying was indeed current, Jesus was hitting the woman with its full force. However, Matthew's intent in appropriating this account is not to introduce an irreconcilable tension into it. Matthew uses it, first, in order to focus upon the "periodization of history" (i.e., the time of the Jews and the time of the Gentiles within salvation history). Matthew also quotes a current saying, possibly of the school of Hillel, to overturn it by Jesus' authority. Matthew wishes to demonstrate the basis upon which Gentiles may sit at the children's table: that of persistent and humble faith.[9]

The final variant we will treat is Jesus' response to the woman in 15:28 (Mk 7:29). The account in Mark gives the impression that

[9] Cf. Woschitz 1985:332 and many other treatments of this subject. These elements appear repeatedly in our analysis of the Gentile mission, below.

the woman has outwitted Jesus. He refers to her as a dog and she responds with something like, "I should be treated so well!" In Mark, Jesus responds to her "on account of this saying." Matthew, on the other hand, understands that the woman's reply shows her great faith, such a faith as is found elsewhere only in the Gentile centurion of Matthew 8. The two accounts end with similar statements by Jesus (Mt 15 has γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις; Mt 8 has ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι.) These are followed by a report of healing.

Those commentators who say Matthew uses the healing as a foil for an account which has to do with the Gentile woman and her faith are basically correct (Harrisville 1966:275 and Held 1963:193). Matthew's expansions of the Marcan text have to do with the acceptability of Gentiles and the woman's great faith. Mark focuses more on the healing itself and the woman's tenacity and wittiness (Harrisville 1966:279).

### B. MATTHEW 15:21-28 AND MATTHEW 8:5-13

The following are similarities between Mt 15:21-28 and Mt 8:5-13. First, Gentiles come to Jesus, begging his aid. Second, healing occurs at a distance. Third, both of the requests come as aid not for the requester, but for someone else. Fourth, both the centurion and the Canaanite woman are humble and confess unworthiness. Fifth, both are commended for their unusual faith. And finally, both end with the phrase, "Let it be done for you as you wish/believe." (Mt 8 has ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι; Mt 15, γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις.) Both immediately report a healing. (Mt 8 has καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ["And his servant was healed in that hour"]; Mt 15, καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης ["And her daughter was healed from that hour"].)

Points of dissimilarity include Jesus' conversation with the centurion and his offer to come heal the servant, and Jesus' saying in vv. 11f.

Mt 8:8b-10 is virtually identical with Lk 7:6b-9 (Q). Mt 8:5-8a serves as a prologue to the discourse with the centurion and does

not mention the Jewish elders coming to Jesus (Lk 7:3-5) to request aid for the centurion, a God-fearer.[10] Luke does not include Jesus' saying in Mt 8:11f, "Many will come from East and West . . ."[11] It is indeed possible that Jesus is willing to heal the centurion's servant in Matthew because, as Luke suggests, he was a God-fearer. It is otherwise difficult to understand Jesus' reluctance to speak with the Canaanite woman in Mt 15.[12]

In any event, the centurion is clearly a Gentile in Jewish territory, possibly a God-fearer, with whom Jesus has no trouble speaking. We will deal more fully with the tension between this account and the account in Matthew 15 in the section on the Gentile mission below. Verses 11f announce the time of the Gentiles, when many from East and West would come and sit at table, while the sons of the kingdom would be cast out. One cannot but be impressed by the similar imagery in the two accounts. In Mt 8, the sons of the kingdom are thrust out, while the Gentiles sit at table. In Matthew 15, the Gentiles are depicted by the woman as eating the crumbs that fall from the table.

### C. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is probable that Matthew wishes to make an emphatic point about the nature of the woman (Canaanite) in con-

[10] See Derrett 1973:175. Derrett says the centurion was probably a God-fearer. Cf. particularly Trilling 1958:83-84. Trilling says "Nach der heute überwiegend vertretenen Auslegung versteht man v. 7 als Frage," bowing to the weight of scholarly consensus that Jesus was unwilling to heal the man's servant and therefore asked a question rather than making a statement ("Shall I come . . . ?"). If this is the case, Matthew must not regard the centurion as a God-fearer. This would explain Matthew's deletion of the statement in Luke that he was. This, however, does not explain why Jesus spoke with him and not with the woman in Mt 15. In our scenario, Luke stands closer to Q than Matthew does and the notice about the centurion being a God-fearer is correct. Matthew abbreviated this part of Luke's account in conformity with his practice of abbreviating narrative sections of miracle stories which are not primarily interesting to him. Matthew is not interested in the centurion as a *God-fearer*, but as a *Gentile!*

[11] This passage (Q) occurs in Lk 13:28-29, in the context of controversies with the Jewish civil and religious authorities.

[12] One possible way out of this impasse is to suggest that to Matthew, the centurion is in Jewish territory. Jesus therefore fulfills the Old Testament requirement of hospitality towards the sojourner and foreigner in Israel. Otherwise, one must

trast to Mark's neutral report of her ethnicity (Syro-Phoenician). If this is correct, we may have an indicator of very different audiences to which the gospels are addressed.[13]

Second, Matthew has apparently interpolated and conflated Mark's basic structure, although he is nowhere enslaved to Mark's wording. Because of the degree to which Matthew's interpolations correspond to his concerns, it is unnecessary to posit Matthew's reliance upon a special source for this account.

Third, Matthew's primary expansion, beginning with Jesus' silence, is motivated by his desire to have Jesus be consistent with his command to the disciples in 10:5f. His response to the Gentile centurion in Mt 8 is a slightly different case, as will see below.

Fourth, Matthew places a common Psalmic appeal on the lips of a Gentile woman, requesting the aid of the messianic son of David.

Fifth, Jesus replies to her with an anti-missionary saying that may have been current in his day.

Sixth, Matthew interprets the woman's continuous "clamoring" and refusal to depart as great faith (v. 28 μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις), in contrast to Peter's "little faith" (ὀλιγόπιστε) in Mt 14:30f when he stepped out to Jesus and yet feared the elements. The Canaanite woman's persistent pleading and dependence upon Jesus for aid in spite of obstacles is notable.

## III. MATTHEW AND THE GENTILE MISSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

As we mentioned above, Jesus' refusal to speak to the woman and his reluctance to heal her daughter introduce a note of tension into

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assume that the centurion is a God-fearer, which Matthew does not make explicit, but which Luke expounds at length, or that Matthew is a poor redactor, since Jesus is able to speak to a Gentile in Mt 8 but cannot in Mt 15.

[13] The issue of transparency inevitably arises with respect to the Gentile mission in Matthew, but we will not deal with it in a systematic fashion in this paper. It is difficult to know when authors are being "transparent" vis-à-vis their own situation and when they are simply reporting events or inserting source material. When redactors deal repeatedly with a particular subject, they pit opposing forces against one another, and arrange sources in such a way as to highlight their concerns. Mod-

Matthew's gospel. Jesus' actions appear at variance with other, universalistic passages, such as 8:11f. At stake in this issue is the question of Matthew's audience, Matthew's understanding of the Gentile mission, and Matthew's understanding of salvation history and its periodization.

We will attempt to establish several points in this section. First, one of the major reasons Matthew wrote his gospel was to defend the Gentile mission. Second, the periodization of history in Matthew regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles does not coincide with other periodizing schemes in Matthew. And third, the audience to which Matthew is writing is predominantly Jewish. It is a community struggling with the issues of the Gentile mission and the break with the synagogue.[14]

The first stage in this examination of the Gentile mission in Matthew must be a survey of Matthew's treatment of his sources.[15] We will examine first Matthew's use of Q and Mark and second Matthew's own expansions. Next, we will examine the redactional setting of 15:21-28 for further clues to Matthew's understanding of the Gentile mission. We will conclude this section with some interpretive comments.

### B. SURVEY OF MATTHEW'S SOURCES

Only five passages in Q deal in some way with Gentiles (given here in their Lukan context): 7:1-10; 10:13-15; 11:29-32; 13:28f; and 14:15-24. None of these passages, however, defend the Gentile mission or present a program for it.[16] The latter four contain a

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ern interpreters likely have a glimpse not only into the historical setting but into the redactor's own social setting as well. Cf. Held 1963:198, for a treatment of the transparency issue in Matthew's concept of the Gentile mission.

[14] Cf. Held 1963:198. Whether Matthew's community had, in fact, broken with the synagogue is not as fruitful an avenue to explore as that of Matthew's understanding of the Gentile mission. Whatever the status with the synagogue, relations with non-Christian Jews were strained.

[15] We will not deal explicitly with Luke, which apparently was not available as a written source for Matthew.

[16] Paul D. Meyer (1970:417) suggests that in the Q document the Gentile mission is a *fait accompli*. While this may be true, Q does not suggest that Gentiles were *per*

polemic against those Jews who rejected Jesus and praise the righteousness and faithfulness of Gentiles over against the Jews. Only two passages (13:28f and 14:15-24) suggest that Gentiles would be included in the kingdom while Jesus' antagonists would be thrust out. However, these passages do not suggest any programmatic understanding or defense of the Gentile mission. Thus, aside from scattered polemical sayings against (Jewish) unbelief, Q knows nothing of a positive and programmatic mission to the Gentiles (Meyer 1970:405.417).

Mark likewise is terse about the Gentile mission or Gentile inclusion in the kingdom. The passages that mention Gentiles are the following: 3:7-12; possibly 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 13:10-27; 15:39; and 16:15. Two of these passages deal specifically with the Gentile mission, 13:10 and 16:15. The first occurs in the apocalyptic discourse, which Matthew more or less borrows whole. The second appears in 16:9-20, a secondary conclusion to the book.

Mk 3 mentions a multitude from Tyre and Sidon who come to be healed. Mk 5:1-20 takes place in Gentile territory (although we do not know if the demoniac is a Jew or a Gentile).[17] Mk 7:24-30 is the account of the Syro-Phoenician woman, parallel to Mk 15, and Mk 15:39 is the statement of the centurion at the cross. Gentiles are not presented negatively in Mark, but neither does the Gentile mission loom large. Rather, Mark assumes this mission, giving more attention to the Messianic secret and to Jesus' authority and healings.[18]

The account of the Syro-Phoenician woman is less notable for its Gentile setting than for the woman's clever response to Jesus (after

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*se* a part of Jesus' ministry, nor does it suggest on what basis the Gentiles were acceptable. This outline of the historical and theological warrant in Jesus' ministry for the inclusion of the Gentiles is what we have referred to as a "programmatic" concern.

[17] Cf. Clark 1962:382-384; cf. also Derrett 1980:70. Derrett thinks the original story of the demoniac (Matthew has two demoniacs) suggests that the demoniac was a "lapsed Jew," not a Gentile. Given Matthew's understanding of Jesus' relation to Gentiles and the account in 15:21-28, it is possible that Matthew thought of the demoniacs in his account as fellow Jews.

[18] It is not, apparently, strange for Jesus to be in Gentile territory in Mark. Jesus' interchange with the woman is more a test than a serious refusal.

all, healing Gentiles is not a problem for Jesus in 3:7-12!). Mark understands that the inclusion of the Gentiles is a matter of the periodization of history. The Jews had temporal priority,[19] but Mark does not pit Gentile faith against Jewish faith as we see in Matthew.[20]

### C. SUMMARY OF PASSAGES CONCERNING GENTILES IN MATTHEW

In the following passages, Matthew refers to Gentiles, the Gentile mission or Gentile inclusion in the kingdom: 2:1f (wise men come from the East); 4:12-17 (a programmatic statement about Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing in "Galilee of the Gentiles," whose fame spread throughout Syria and the Decapolis);[21] 6:7.32 (negative statements about Gentiles heaping up empty phrases and worrying about sustenance—Q); 8:5-13 (healing of the centurion's servant—Q with extensive Matthean expansions); 10:5.18 (the mission of the twelve); 11:10-22 (polemic against the Jews; Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah are better than they are—Q); 12:18-21 (Isaiah's prophecy about the hope of the Gentiles—formula quotation); 12:41f (polemic against certain Jews compared to which the inhabitants of Ninevah and the queen of the South were better—Q); 15:21-28 (account of the Canaanite woman—Q with extensive Matthean expansions); 20:25 (negative statement about rulers of the Gentiles); 21:33-43 (parable of householder and vineyard, kingdom will be given to another nation—Mark); 22:1-10 (parable of the wedding feast—Q); 24:14 (apocalyptic discourse, gospel must first be preached to the whole world—Mark); 25:32-46 . . . (final judgment on the nations); 26:13 (faith of woman who anointed Jesus will be remembered throughout the world); and 28:19 (the Great Commission—Mark; || Lk 24:47).

[19] Mk 7:27: "Let the children first be fed." Cf. Russell 1980:282.

[20] Note that the statement, "Many will come from East and West" is lacking in Mark, as well as the sayings about Ninevah, Sodom, and the queen of Sheba—all found in Q. The Syro-Phoenician woman is not commended for her faith greater than any in Israel, but rather on account of "this saying."

[21] Possibly from a variety of sources, cf. Mk 1:14; 3:7-19.

The following passages are uniquely Matthean: 2:1f; 4:12f (formula quotation); 12:18-21 (formula quotation); 20:25; 26:13 (partial parallel). The following passages are more or less intact from Mark or Q: 4:17 (Mark); 6:32 (Q); 8:11-12 (Q); 11:10-2101 (Q); 12:41-42 (Q); 22:1-10 (Q); 24:14 (Mark); and 28:19 (Mark). Matthew has taken and substantially altered the material is 8:5-10 (Q); 15:21-28 (Mark); Lk 10:5-18 (the mission of the 12 or 70, specifically altered to preclude Gentile activity); 25:32ff (various sources); and 26:13. (Q). Matthew often borrows material directly from his sources and rarely adds own material.

Of the material which is strictly Matthean, only the formula quotations dealing with promises to the Gentiles are uniquely Matthean. The account of the wise men is probably traditional. Mt 20:25 sounds much like other negative statements about Gentiles and may have drawn a similar statement by analogy. Thus, Matthew most often interprets his material by subtle alterations and particularly by redactional placement. An example of this is the juxtaposition of the account of the healing of the centurion's son in Mt 8 with the universalistic statement in vv. 11f.

### D. REDACTIONAL SETTING OF MATTHEW 15:21-28

The redactional setting of these various sayings and accounts conveys much about Matthew's concerns and purposes. Mt 8:5-13 appears in the context of several healings and discipleship sayings. These include 8:1-4 (the healing of a leper); 5-13 (the healing of the centurion's servant); 14-17 (the healing of a woman); 18-22 (discipleship sayings); 23-27 (the calming of the storm and a saying about faith); and 28-34 (the healing of a demoniac). We see here the healing of a leper, a Gentile, a woman, and a demoniac. These healings are interrupted by discipleship sayings and a miracle with a statement about faith. Matthew 9 is also replete with accounts of Jesus' dealings with those who were marginalized or excluded from the community: a paralytic, 1-8; tax collectors and sinners, 9-

13; a woman with an issue of blood, 20-22; blind men, 27-31; and a dumb demoniac, 32-34. Both chapters interrupt their accounts of healings by unusual sayings. Matthew 8 contains "hard" discipleship sayings and Jesus' rebuke of his disciples for their lack of faith, while Matthew 9 has Jesus' statement concerning new wine in a new wineskin.

It is possible, first, that all the healing accounts (as well as the accounts of "tax collectors and sinners") are connected by the concept of impurity. The summary statement in 9:28-34 may function to highlight that Jesus has proclaimed them pure. The account of the Gadarene demoniac may also function in this way (the unclean spirits come out of the man and enter the pigs, which perish). Second, it is also possible that all the accounts have to do in some way with faith (the faith of the marginalized or excluded is impressive—cf. 8:2.10.26; 9:18.21.28)! Third, Jesus' dealings with these impure people suggests that by his action and by their faith, they are now pure.

Mt 15:21-28 also appears in such a setting. It contains a lengthy discourse about cleanness and uncleanness. Matthew has intentionally juxtaposed the account of the healing of the Canaanite woman's son here to emphasize that what was formerly unclean (Gentiles) is now clean by means of Jesus' proclamation and on the basis of faith.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Matthew has a much greater interest in the relationship between Jews and Gentiles than does either Mark or Q. Of the passages given, most are based upon Matthew's sources, but have been freely adapted to suit Matthew's context and concerns. His expansions and additions serve to highlight the inclusion of the Gentiles (and possibly the controversy associated with that inclusion). Furthermore, Gentiles are regularly the object of Jesus' word or action in Matthew. Yet Matthew still has a clear delineation between the "time of the Jews" and the "time of the Gentiles."

Besides this curious interest in Gentiles in an otherwise thoroughly Jewish gospel (cf. Held 1963:198),[22] Jesus' earthly ministry is framed by the promise to the nations (Mt 4 and 28). Furthermore, the nations were represented at Jesus' birth and death (Mt 2:1-12 and 27:54), the events immediately following Jesus' baptism and temptation (4:15-24f), and post-resurrection appearance (28:19f).[23] Matthew's understanding of Gentiles and their inclusion is not peripheral, but central to the gospel.

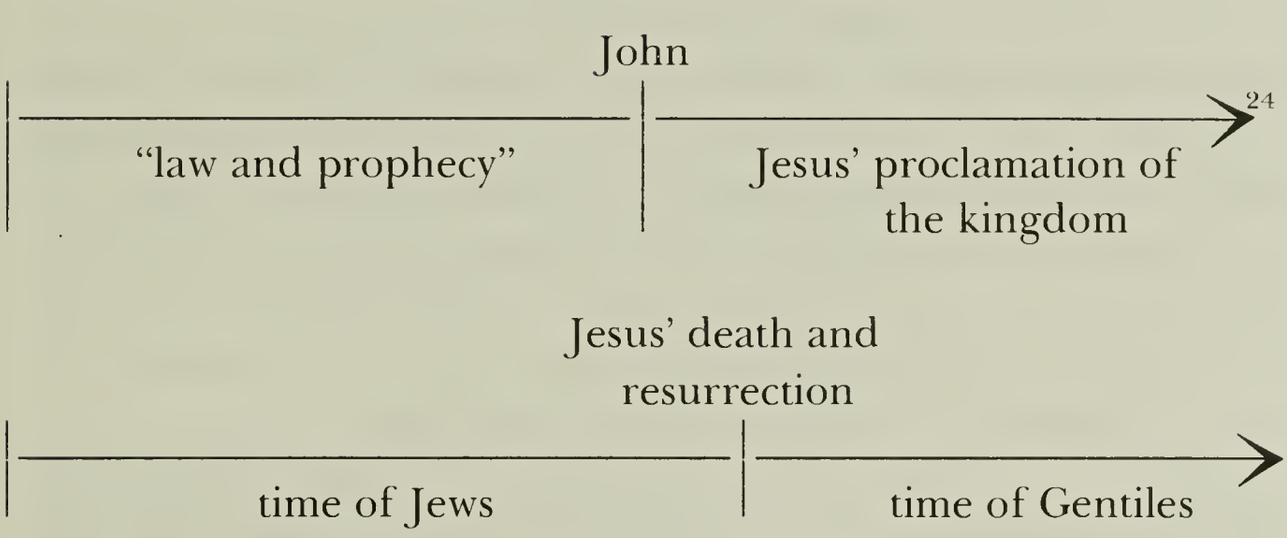
The issue of Matthew's periodization of salvation history is somewhat more elusive. Some passages clearly suggest discontinuity between Jesus' ministry and the Old Testament. Others suggest continuity. One may particularly note such passages as 1:1, "the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." On the other hand, "the law and the prophets prophesied until John," suggests a clear break with the past. At the risk of yet another extraneous theory of Matthew's periodization of history, we would like to suggest the following scheme as operative in Matthew.

1) Attempts to discern one coherent scheme of the periodization of history in Matthew are misguided. One reason so many scholars have differed concerning the division of history in Matthew is that

[22] Held 1963:198. John Meier's (1976:20) reasons for suggesting that Matthew was a Gentile are not convincing. Matthew's abundant concern for Jewish history, tradition, and terminology, negative comments about Gentiles, and the use of the Q material to provoke Israel to jealousy all suggest a Jewish character.

[23] We are impressed with Matthew's concern for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, which he sometimes demonstrates by formula quotations and sometimes by more subtle means. For example, the wise men from the East, found only in Matthew, may well represent Matthew's concern for the fulfillment of such Old Testament passages as Psalm 72:10-11 (71 in LXX): "May the kings of Tarshish and the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!" (RSV). Cf. also Derrett 1973:161-186. We are intrigued by Derrett's suggestion that with these two healings (Mt 8 and Mt 15) Matthew has in mind the Old Testament stories of the widow of Zarepath (1 Kg 17) and the healing of Naaman (2 Kg 5). This, in effect, is a typological appropriation by Matthew of Old Testament narratives and application of them to Jesus. Derrett parallels the Gentile soldier to Naaman and a woman's dead child to the woman of Zarepath. This may well be the sort of connection Matthew has in mind. In other cases, however, Derrett's parallels are far-fetched (note Derrett's typological presentations of the Geresene demoniac).

Matthew himself presents different schemes. The following graphs are examples of this:




[24]




It is difficult to make a clear division at any point in Jesus' career as reflected in Matthew, because there are always elements of continuity as well as discontinuity.

It is probable, then, that Matthew is operating under the assumption of differing standards for the division of history, depending upon the subject in question. For the viability of the law and the prophets, the prophetic activity under the old system ceases with John. One must be careful here, however, because the time of the fulfillment of prophecy begins with Jesus' birth (Mt 1:23; 2:6-15). However, we do not possess a clear statement about the time of the inclusion of the Gentiles until the giving of the Great Commission (although individual Gentiles are commended for their faith earlier in the gospel). Thus Matthew is operating

[24] One might argue that Luke's account (Lk 16:16) and not Matthew's (Mt 11:12) stresses the discontinuity between the period culminating in John the Baptist and the new age. Lk 16:16 says "The law and the prophets were until John; since then (ἀπὸ τότε) the good news of the kingdom of God is preached. Even though Matthew does not include so explicit a reference as Luke, describing the period before John as categorically different from what follows is still important to Matthew. Cf. Mt 11:13: "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John." Cf. also 11:12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now." The point is, Matthew operates under different systems of periodizing history, as our graphs indicate. But Matthew is nowhere as explicit and clear in his formulations as Luke.

under more than one scheme regarding the periodization of history.[25]

2) The above analysis in no way answers the question of Matthew's preoccupation with Gentiles during Jesus' ministry. Every major transition in Jesus' life is accompanied by Gentiles. Matthew's concern for Gentiles runs throughout the book, whatever his understanding of the periodization of history. The use of sources and his own additions underscore Matthew's belief in a "time of the Jews" which predated the Gentile inclusion. As important, however, is Matthew's undercurrent of Gentile inclusion and Jesus' acceptance of Gentiles during his ministry.

There is a tension, then, built into the book of Matthew. Matthew includes many traditions which underscore that the Gentiles were not to be included during Jesus' ministry. But in his concern for the Gentile mission he capitalizes upon those traditions which deal with Jesus and the Gentiles. He uses them as a basis for demonstrating the importance of the Gentile mission, a mission warranted not only by the post-resurrection Jesus, but also by Jesus' earthly ministry.

Matthew thus introduces tension into the gospel in two ways. First he uses and even elaborates upon traditions which insisted upon the Jewish character of Jesus' ministry. Second, he uses all the accounts available to him concerning Jesus' dealings with Gentiles. He then conflates them or otherwise interprets them as Jesus' own warrant for the mission to the Gentiles (cf. Gundry 1982:310; Thompson 1981:281).

Based upon the analysis above, some tentative comments on Matthew's community and the occasion for the writing of the gospel may be in order. Matthew may have written to a community of Jewish Christians struggling with the idea of the Gentile mission. Because of the break with the synagogue,[26] this predominantly

[25] As we point out more fully below, in spite of Matthew's agreement with the assessment that Jesus' ministry was to other Jews, it is Jesus' ministry that validates the later mission to the Gentiles.

[26] As we mention above, it is unclear whether the break with the synagogue had already occurred or was impending. We agree with J. Meier that Matthew's church

Jewish church (possibly in Syria)[27] had to move its attention away from the mission to other Jews and focus instead upon Gentiles. Matthew built upon Q's notion of Gentile acceptance. But instead of incorporating Q's motif of "Gentile inclusion intended to drive the Jews to jealousy," Matthew focused upon the Gentile presence throughout the life of Jesus. He emphasized Jesus' warrant for the mission to the Gentiles and the basis by which Gentiles may be accepted at the "children's table": that of humble faith which persists in spite of obstacles.

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was one in transition and that his church is "molded by its experience of a shift in its Christian existence" (Meier 1976:22).

[27] Schweizer suggests Syria was the location of Matthew's community (1983:129). Considering Matthew's programmatic statement in Mt 4 and the spreading of Jesus' fame throughout Syria (4:24)—as well as Syria's proximity to Palestine and its traditions—this location is not unlikely.

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# Theology, Exegesis and Paul's Thought: Reflections on *Paul and the Torah* by Lloyd Gaston

LOREN STUCKENBRUCK

## I. INTRODUCTION

The post-Holocaust years have witnessed a burgeoning interest in Jewish-Christian relations among Christian theologians and biblical scholars. Recognition that traditional attitudes have all too frequently led to or accompanied visible expressions of religious anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism has resulted in calls for theological reassessment and reflection. Especially in the last two decades, many scholars have attempted to reformulate theological and exegetical approaches that will foster Jewish-Christian ecumenical dialogue and understanding.

The fervor of this recent discussion reflects a renewed awareness of the significance biblical exegesis has had and can have for religious thought and life in a modern context. Thus some basic questions, which have been vigorously debated throughout the past two hundred years, have now acquired a sharpened focus. Among the many issues surrounding the Jewish-Christian dialogue in particular, the following are repeatedly being raised by Christian thinkers: What is an appropriate response, theologically and exegetically, to almost two millennia of Christian triumphalism expressed at the expense of Jewish brothers and sisters? To what degree, for instance, and in what respect ought one be willing to de-emphasize christology in Christian self-definition for the sake of promoting

mutual tolerance and understanding? Whatever direction one might take in wrestling with these problems, it is impossible to evade the well-worn, but important methodological issue: How are the disciplines of theology and biblical studies related? More specifically, to what extent ought one's understanding of a given text or texts be identified with a hermeneutical process which explores the possible bearing of scriptural tradition on particular problems encountered today? In short, what does it mean to do exegesis in *context*?

The impact of the current Jewish-Christian dialogue on biblical exegesis has made itself particularly evident within the arena of Pauline studies. One important recent attempt to relate exegesis to ecumenical ideals is embodied in a collection of ten essays by Lloyd Gaston entitled *Paul and the Torah*. These exegetical studies, which span from 1977 to 1987, address Paul's thought in relation to Judaism and, despite representing separate treatments of various Pauline texts, show a remarkable coherence. When considered as a whole, Gaston's essays constitute something of a theology of Paul or, perhaps more appropriately, a theological program carried out in relation to Paul's thought. While readily admitting his consciousness of working out of "a post-Auschwitz situation," Gaston nevertheless claims that he is primarily concerned with Paul's original intent.[1] Thus he attempts to place his thought in a specific historical context in such a way that Paul's attitude towards the status of Jews and Gentiles within God's economy becomes pertinent for current discussions.

While Gaston's concern for and use of history is not novel to recent Pauline scholarship, his work is unique in its thoroughness for calling historical and exegetical arguments that question the notion that Paul's thought was directed against contemporary

[1] Gaston (1987:2): "The aim of the present study is then not apologetic, for it has been written not out of guilt toward Israel but of gratitude to Israel that a new perspective allows us to pose questions in a new way. It deals not with how Paul can be understood in a post-Auschwitz situation but with how the recognition of living Israel might help us to a better understanding of Paul in his own situation."

Judaism and its Torah given at Sinai. As a result, Gaston consistently tries to absolve the historical figure of Paul—the *Ur-Paulus*—from any guilt of anti-Judaism so that his thought can accommodate the concerns of those who advocate mutual, religious recognition among Jews and Christians.[2] His reconstruction of Paul's thought thus assumes an identification of scriptural exegesis with the hermeneutical task.[3] Whether this underlying premise actually corresponds to Gaston's claim to be doing descriptive exegesis within the framework of early Jewish thought bears further examination.

In the following article I hope to delineate the essence of Gaston's approach to Paul and to propose some critical reflections with respect to his method. Before engaging in the evaluation at hand, it is first appropriate to emphasize that in his theological concern to foster understanding and religious tolerance between Jews and Christians, Gaston by no means stands alone among biblical scholars. Not surprisingly, other ways of demonstrating this stance have been followed. Therefore, criticism of his approach does not have to imply a rejection of his theological agenda. An appraisal of Gaston's interpretation of Paul, then, is compelled to offer a brief

[2] Others who have consistently tried to exonerate Paul from any real critique of Judaism most notably include Stendahl (1976), M. Barth (1983), van Buren (1980 and 1983), and Gager (1985). E. P. Sanders' study on *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) is mostly concerned with a positive representation of Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism; cf. esp. his denunciation of German scholarship on pp. 33-59. His history-of-religion assessment, however, has only an indirect bearing on his reconstruction of Paul's thought. According to Sanders, Paul's apparently negative statements concerning the Torah cannot be expected to have produced a valid and accurate critique of Judaism; they are better explained as originating from the outside, i.e. from a christological perspective that suggests an altogether different "pattern of religion." Thus Sanders contends that "*this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*" (1977:552). This portrait of Paul is, however, modified later by Sanders; cf. note 4.

[3] In fact, Gaston (1987:11.21,46,57,62,73,80f) labels the method of his own exegetical work as consisting of an "experimental hermeneutic." He consistently and deliberately searches for alternative interpretations of Paul that place his thought within the framework of Jewish thought in the Second Temple period. Two leading questions are both explicitly and implicitly brought to the text: (1) "What would this text mean if one were" to argue . . . ? "Is it possible to read it [the text]" in a different way?

description of two additional ways in which scholars have recently chosen to relate their ecumenical views to the writings of Paul.

## II. ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF RELATING EXEGESIS TO HERMENEUTICS IN PAUL

Unlike Gaston, some interpreters opposed to religious exclusivism have seen little in Paul that suggests a positive view of Judaism and the Torah. Currently, perhaps the most well-known and influential work from this perspective is Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (1974).[4] Ruether's method is best reflected in the conclusion of her discussion of Romans 9-11:

> "This 'mystery' [Rom 11:25] in Paul does not suggest in any way an ongoing validity of the Mosaic covenant as a community for salvation in its own right. Contemporary ecumenists who use Romans 11 to argue that Paul does not believe God has rejected the people of the Mosaic covenant speak out of good intentions but inaccurate exegesis." (1974:106)

For Ruether the theology of Paul, when properly understood, does not provide any basis for an attitude of religious tolerance. In fact, from the perspective of Christian triumphalism, an appropriation of Pauline thought can lead to dangerous consequences. Paul rejected the validity of Judaism, and his view must simply be regarded as wrong. In this respect, the theological and exegetical tasks ought to be kept separate. Since the Bible has functioned as a major determinant of the church's self-understanding throughout its history, it must be subjected to a thoroughgoing critique

[4] Cf. also Eckardt (1973:57) and Davies (1969:92-107, esp. 104). Sanders (1983:197f) acknowledges having once held a similar position: exegetically, he maintains that for Paul salvation through Christ meant that unconverted Jews are cut off from God, while theologically, he would vote against such a view. More recently, however, Sanders has hesitated to interpret Paul so categorically.

from the point of view of theology. In the end, for Ruether Paul can, at best, furnish only a negative example for Christians.

Though Gaston's exegesis shares with Ruether the same theological agenda to accept Judaism as an authentic religion in its own right, his portrayal of Paul's thought is fundamentally different from hers. Whereas Paul is understood by Ruether in continuity with the way Paul has been appropriated by the church through most of its history, Gaston's analysis attempts to portray the Pauline message as a critique of the church's—especially Luther's—interpretation of Paul.

Another way of relating Paul's thought to current discussions—which includes most exegetes—is less decisive and hence more difficult to describe with specificity. Scholars who adopt this general approach are, with Ruether, not wholly satisfied with deriving a religious perspective of Judaism from the results of exegesis. But at the same time, like Gaston, they are not prepared to drive a wedge between the descriptive and normative tasks, which they tend to regard as inseparable concerns. Instead, an effort is made to take seriously Paul's changing circumstances, whether they stem from his own theological development (e.g., Hübner 1980) or from the diversity of problems which his letters sought to address. While some of Paul's statements, then, may in fact be critical of the Jewish Torah, there are others which can provide a positive stimulus for Jewish-Christian discussions.[5]

This methodology, broadly defined, differs significantly from those adopted by Gaston and Ruether. Paul is not interpreted according to a self-contained logical scheme; his thought as it relates to the Torah is, rather, viewed as a dynamic. Pauline theology, to some degree, must take account of complexities inherent in the historical dimension.

It is in this light that Gaston's own effort to uncover a "historical" Paul raises the problem whether a simplified historical reconstruction can be a legitimate outcome of careful exegesis. In other words, is it possible that one's assessment of Paul's own circum-

[5] In this respect, the very different works of Beker (1980:337) and Räisänen (1980:268f) are quite similar.

stances can produce a scenario which is, on the one hand, historically plausible and, on the other hand, theologically supportive of the mutual recognition of Jews and Christians? A determination of whether the convergence of Gaston's portrayal of the past and present agenda merits serious consideration depends ultimately on a critical review of his exegesis, to which we now turn our attention.

## III. GASTON'S UNDERSTANDING OF PAUL

Gaston (1987:21) agrees with many traditional Pauline exegetes that the Jewish Torah and Christ are mutually exclusive categories. But how this notion is worked out in his interpretation of Paul departs from the bulk of scholarship in almost every way. Indeed, this point of departure, though in itself often considered axiomatic, actually functions as a basis for his paradigm. Following a path already known through the work of Krister Stendahl (1976), Gaston proposes that one "take seriously" Paul's self-understanding as an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 1:5; 15:15ff; Gal 1:16; 2:2.7.9).

### 1. PAUL AND THE GENTILES

Paul's account of the conference between himself and the leadership in Jerusalem (James, Cephas and John) in Galatians 2 is crucial for Gaston's construction of Paul's theology. He describes the major result of this meeting as an agreement to divide the mission field (2:7-9): Peter was sent to the "circumcised," and Paul to the "uncircumcised." Gaston claims that this division was consciously and consistently observed by Paul; therefore, his theological formulations with respect to Judaism must be understood in light of an *exclusive* mission to the Gentiles. As a result, all of Paul's apparently negative statements concerning the Jewish Torah are to be interpreted in relation to Gentiles. Gaston (1987:22), of course, admits that there were a few Jews, mostly co-workers, among the congregations to which Paul was writing, but they are for him the exception.

The thrust of Paul's gospel to the Gentiles was that through "the faith of Christ"[6] the righteousness of God has been extended from Jews to the Gentiles. Without being required to observe the Torah (Rom 3:21), they now have the opportunity to be included into God's covenant people. Thus statements that speak negatively about the law have little or nothing to do with a problem of Jewish legalism or boasting;[7] instead they reflect Paul's insistence that Gentile inclusion takes place only through Christ. Gaston presses this point, for if it holds true, it would strengthen his theological judgment that observance of the Torah remains in Paul's thought a valid religious expression for Jews.[8] Following through with the notion of an apostleship only to Gentiles, Gaston infers—despite Paul's relative silence about Jews[9] —that for Paul the Jews, who are already God's covenant people, do not need Christ in order to secure their position as God's people. Not Jewish abrogation, but Gentile inclusion into Israel constitutes Paul's basic thesis. By Gaston's own admission, this scheme comes "close" to attributing to Paul a "two-covenant" theology (1987:79.123).[10]

[6] Gaston (1987:12) assumes the subjective genitive. For Gaston this translation suggests that faith as definitively demonstrated by Christ cannot simply be categorized as the opposite of τὰ ἔργα νόμου. He implicity rejects the faith-works dichotomy in Paul, so that Jews and Gentiles (Christian and non-Christian) are placed on a similar footing where human activity before God is concerned.

[7] Thus Gaston's view is in complete disagreement with Rudolf Bultmann's anthropologically-oriented analysis, according to which Paul's polemics are specifically directed against self-reliance expressed by Jewish boasting in the Torah (cf. Bultmann 1955:240ff).

[8] A brief comparison at this point with Sanders' work is instructive. Gaston essentially agrees with Sanders' thesis that most early Jewish literature conceives of the Torah in terms of a "covenantal nomism" (1977:75,236). Sanders defines "covenantal nomism" as "the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and what the covenant requires as the proper response of man [sic] his obedience to its commandments, while providing the means of atonement for transgression" (1977:75). But whereas Sanders places Paul's statements on the law within a "different pattern of religion" (Christianity), Gaston (1987:26, cf. also 119) insists that Paul's perspective is consistent with that of his Jewish contemporaries.

[9] Gaston, of course, acknowledges important exceptions in Rom 2:16-29; 3:1-3 and chapters 9–11. Obviously, for the sake of his portrayal of Paul's thought, he regards 1 Thess 2:14–17 as a later interpolation.

[10] The descriptive terms "dual-covenant" or "two-covenant," in the sphere of Jewish and Christian discussions, have customarily been used to designate a scheme in

Gaston works out his emphasis on Paul's ministry to the Gentiles by devoting most of his studies to passages and motifs in Galatians and Romans that might be considered problematic for his reading of Paul. A few aspects of his analysis will be briefly reviewed.

**First, Paul's "universal" statements.** Gaston maintains that in Romans, whenever Paul uses terms like πᾶς (cf. esp. 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 10:4-11; 15:11) and ἄνθρωπος (esp. 2:1-16; 3:4-28; 5:12, 15, 18, 19; 6:6; 7:1-24; 9:20), he is specifically concerned with Gentiles and entitles the eighth chapter "For *All* the Believers" (1987:116-134). Though acknowledging that these expressions, when taken literally, bear upon Jew and Gentile alike, Gaston insists that in Paul's thought they have a practical significance only in relation to the Gentiles. He is at great pains to interpret πᾶς in 3:19f. 22f. as specifying the Gentiles, who are not justified ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (v. 20), who are shown God's righteousness when they have faith (v. 22), and who "have sinned and lack the glory of God" (v. 23).[11] Gaston interprets the preceding argument of the letter (1:18–3:20) as an indictment of the Gentile world, except, of course, for 2:17-29. But as expected, his exegesis of 2:17-29 (1987:138f) is not satisfied with traditional interpretations. Rather than being a broad calumniation of Jewish hypocrisy in order to place Jews on the same level as Gentiles before God, this passage is, according to Gaston, concerned with the failure of Jews to be a light to the nations. Jewish transgressions of the Torah have prevented Gentiles from becoming proselytes (cf. 2:24). Gentile inclusion through proselytism is a solution that for Paul has failed in the past and is made obsolete in the present through Christ (3:21). Now Gaston is certainly correct that Paul's phrase οὐ μόνον . . . ἀλλὰ καί (4:12-16; cf. 3:29; 9:23f) stresses the incorporation of Gentiles on the basis of God's promise

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which both affiliations are allowed an authentic religious existence, so that there is no need for one to mission or convert the other.

[11] Gaston (1987:122) interprets 1:18–3:20 as essentially an indictment of the Gentile world, except, of course, for 2:17-29 (cf. discussion below). Though the argument moves from a description of the problem to its solution (3:21ff; cf. also ch. 4), he maintains that Paul's logic reflects the reverse; Paul wrote 1:18–3:20 in light of 3:21-31 (the solution, πίστις) which Gaston reads as solely concerned with Gentiles and their inclusion.

to Abraham. But it is doubtful whether for Paul the legitimization of Gentile inclusion excluded for him the necessity of faith in Christ for Jews (11:14). Gaston's reading of πᾶς ignores the nearest antecedent (excluding the catenized citation of vv. 10-18) in v. 9b, which summarily describes the situation to which Paul's interpretation of the gospel in 3:20 is addressed: "What then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all, for we have said before that *both Jews and Greeks, all [πᾶς], are under sin.*" It comes as no surprise that this verse plays a minimal role in Gaston's exegesis (1987:120.133). Gaston minimizes the significance of 3:9 for interpreting 2:17-29 and subsumes the statement under a caricature of the world (i.e., Gentiles) characterized by idolatry, godlessness and injustice.[12]

A response to Gaston's attempt to define Paul's encompassing statements requires some comment on the overall argument of Romans. While the stress of the formula οὐ μόνον . . . ἀλλὰ καί quite likely reflects Paul's apologetic attempt at dealing with opposition to his ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles, another recurring phrase suggests a broader horizon: "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (1:16; 10:12; cf. 2:9f; 3:9). In 1:16 it first appears in explicit connection with the gospel: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Gaston's scheme confines the sense of "first" to a mere formality[13] and, in effect, isolates it from Paul's introductory comment about the gospel.

One can certainly agree with Gaston that here Paul emphasizes the priority of the Jews in salvation history (cf. esp. Rom 9-11); but this emphasis ought not to be absolutized at the expense of a more complex, yet natural reading of the text: Paul is nevertheless careful to retain the notion that the gospel is for all, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In this connection, Gaston (1987:121)

[12] It is interesting to note that Gager (1985:215), who otherwise agrees with Gaston's interpretation of Paul, admits that here Paul wants to place both Jews and Gentiles on an equal footing.

[13] I.e., it indicates the diachronic scheme of salvation history. Gaston (1987:118) renders τε πρῶτον weakly as "in the first place"; first the Jews are elected as God's people, then the Gentiles are offered inclusion through Christ.

ignores the probability that Paul's anticipated visit to Jerusalem provided one occasion for the letter to the Romans. Paul not only expected to meet opposition in Jerusalem from "the disobedient ones in Judea," but also planned to deliver the offering from the Gentile Christians to "the saints" (11:25.31). With this in mind, Paul is compelled to ask the Christians at Rome for intercessory prayer (cf. Jervell 1977:61-74 and Wilckens 1974:110-170). Thus Paul and his Gentile readers are related in the text to Jews on two fronts: on the one hand, non-believing Jews (cf., e.g., 11:18) and, on the other hand, Jewish Christians, whose lives have been profoundly affected by the manifestation of a righteousness apart from the Torah. Paul does not distinguish between these groups more explicitly in the course of his argument because of his conviction that his mission to the Gentiles belongs within the larger framework of the particularity of Israel and the righteous and faithful character of God. The theological problem facing Paul was how to argue for an equal place for Gentiles among the people of God, and yet retain the priority of Israel, since both are God's covenant people in salvation-history and the initial recipients of the gospel.

**Second, the figure of Abraham in Romans 4.** Gaston's stress on the Gentile-orientation of Paul's thought is further augmented in his intriguing study of "Abraham and the Righteousness of God" (1987:46-63). In contrast to Günther Bornkamm (1977:152) and Ernst Käsemann (1971:79.85),[14] Gaston denies that the figure of Abraham functions as an example of faith that illustrates a righteousness apart from the law (3:21.27). His analysis begins with the Hebrew text of Gen. 15:6 and how it was interpreted in the literature of the OT, as well as in early and later (e.g., Nachmanides) Judaism. In applying his experimental hermeneutic, Gaston tries to demonstrate the possibility of understanding צְדָקָה in Gen. 15:6 as a reference to God's, not Abraham's, righteousness. According to this reading, Abraham believed God's promise concerning progeny (vv. 4f) and counted the matter to him (לוֹ; i.e.,

[11] For Käsemann (1969:184) Paul's opponents in Rom 4 are pious Jews who emphasize the importance of works.

God) as an act of righteousness that would be fulfilled. He argues that Gen 15:1-6 is at least partially analogous to the genres of individual lament and oracle of salvation, both of which end with praise of God (1987:50). If the comparison is legitimate at all, Gaston surmises that "it would not be inappropriate for Abraham to conclude by ascribing righteousness to God."

Gaston contends that deutero-Isaiah (Is 48:8-13 and 51:1-8) expands upon a combination of this tradition and the promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations (Gen 17:4-6) by stressing God's righteousness. For Gaston, the latter Isaiah passage is especially significant since God's צְדָקָה (51:1.5f) is linked through *parallelismus membrorum* with salvation for Israel and the nations.[15] Within this background of the appropriation of Gen 15:6 is placed Paul's use of the verse in Rom 4:3. Gaston proposes that Paul's citation preserves the notion of God's righteousness as the fulfillment of a promise. Paul in turn applies it to an argument that Abraham is also the father of the uncircumcised (Rom 4:11); God's righteousness to Abraham has been fulfilled in the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's people with equal standing as the Jews. As a result, Rom 4 for Gaston is not about exemplary faith, but about the grace in which God has fulfilled the promise to Abraham in his heirs (vv. 5f.9.11.23f). Abraham is not a type, but a forbearer of later Jews and Gentiles who belong to the covenant people of God.

Once again, Gaston presents his argument in either/or fashion. His insight into the possibilities of interpreting Gen 15:6 merits serious consideration and would square well with Käsemann's overall contention (1969:168-182) that God's righteousness in Paul is to be characterized as dynamic, divine activity in the world. An appeal to God's righteousness, however, does not necessarily exclude the idea of Abraham's righteousness. The particular form of the citation of Gen 15:6 in Rom 4:3 militates against a one-sided

[15] Gaston (1987:56) attributes this interpretation to Philo, *Abr.* 262-273; Heb 11:11; James 2:23; Neh 9:7f; 1 Macc 2:52; *Mekilta*, 5; and Sir 44:19-21. On the other hand, Abraham's righteousness is stressed in passages such as Gen 22:16-18; 26:3-5; and Philo, *L.A.* 3.228.

interpretation. Whereas the verb of Gen 15:6 is unambiguously an active form (וַתְּחַשְּׁבֶהָ with obj. suff., "he counted it"), the citation renders the verb with a passive (ἐλογίσθη) in accordance with the Targums and LXX tradition. Gaston, who argues that Paul's citation was based on a Hebrew *Vorlage*, tries to explain this difference on the basis of the language of Ps 106:31a, where Phinehas' exemplary zeal "was counted" (pass.) to him for (לְ) righteousness. It is difficult to understand, however, how the language of Ps. 106 could have influenced the rendering without also bequeathing its concept of human righteousness.[16]

**Third, Paul and the law in Galatians**. Paul's negative statements concerning the law in Galatians confront Gaston's views with a more complicated problem. A viewpoint that simply has Paul addressing Gentiles merely with respect to the Gentile (and not Jewish) situation cannot avoid the difficulty that Paul refers to an oppressive law (Gal 4) which has interrupted the flow of salvation history between God's promise to Abraham and its fulfillment in Christ (Gal 3). Whereas J. Christiaan Beker (1980 and 1990) has, for the most part, attributed the largely negative portrayal of the law in Galatians to the letter's contingent character,[17] Gaston cautiously introduces a distinction in νόμος between the "Torah," on the one hand, and the "law," on the other. For Gaston "Torah" is an appropriate translation in instances where Paul is concerned with the covenantal idea, whether it be the specific Sinai covenant or the part of the law which Gentile Christians are thought to be capable of fulfilling.[18] Paul speaks of this νόμος only in positive

[16] A better argument in favor of Gaston's explanation, barring a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, would have been the use of the passive form in order to avoid the awkwardness of a human reckoning of righteousness to God. But all this is an explanation on the level of translation. If one were to assume with Gaston that Paul was using a Hebrew *Vorlage* that corresponds to the MT, the correspondence between the citation in Rom 4:3 and the LXX tradition would suggest that Paul was by no means the first to translate the passage with the passive. In this case, the form may be explicable as a customary *passivum divinum*.

[17] "A coherent view of the law cannot be bought at the expense of Paul's contextual argument" (Beker 1980:235).

[18] Cf. Gaston, chapter 1 (esp. 29-32), 2 (37-44) and Gaston's translation of Rom 3:21-31; 5:12-21; 7:1-8; Gal 3:6-4:21 (169-90). The translation, however, does not always match the results of his exegesis; cf. e.g., p. 11 with Gal 2:19 (1987:186).

terms. But, though possessing an intimate connection to the Torah in Gaston's scheme, the "law" has a negative function in relation to Gentiles. The relationship between this law and the Gentile situation stems from the identification of Torah with wisdom present at creation (Prov 8:27-31; WisSol 7:22; 9:2.9). Thus the "law" acquires a cosmic significance outside the bounds of God's covenant with Israel. It represents God's ordering of the whole world. This universalizing of the Torah made it possible to hold the nations accountable to the Torah[19] as well as preserve Israel's favored status as "the Lord's portion" (Dt 4:19). Against this background the "law," which Gaston regards as mediated by angelic rulers outside the realm of God's relationship with Israel (Gal 3:19),[20] is impotent when compared with the Torah, because it is brought to bear on the world apart from a covenantal notion of grace. Whereas Jews can observe the Torah in response to the act of a gracious God, Gentile accountability to the "law" subjugates them to the powers of sin and death. The Gentiles are redeemed not from the Torah, but from the "law."

This distinction extends in Gaston's reading beyond Galatians. Two examples from Romans are revealing. Gaston contends that in 5:12-21 Paul deals explicitly with Gentiles (not humanity as a whole) and the law in connection with Adam. Sin and death are the result of Adam's sin; the "law," though not identical with these powers, makes its appearance with them. Gaston's translation of 5:13f reflects his attempt to protect the Torah from any inherently calumniable association:

[19] Gaston comes close to agreeing with Räisänen's emphasis on Paul's inconsistent and confused use of νόμος. Like Räisänen (1983:42-62), he struggles to take seriously Paul's statements that would suggest an abrogation of the law. Gaston's starting point, however, is different (1987:4); he assumes that Paul understood "covenantal nomism" and suggests that Paul's view of Judaism ought not be derived from a Christian (i.e., non-Jewish) perspective.

[20] Gaston (1987:40.200, n. 23). In this connection, Gaston cites haggadic traditions that represent the nations as having rejected God's offer of the Torah before it was given to Israel; cf. *Mekilta*, Bahodesh 5; *Shab.* 88b; *Exod. R.* 5:9; *Sot.* 8:6; and *Sot.* 35b. Especially significant for Gaston is the reference to IV Ezra 7:20-24. Gaston implies that the stress on Gentile accountability was an outgrowth of apocalyptic literature where God's judgment over the entire world is central.

"[13] For Sin was in the world before the Torah [of Moses] came. But, sin is not charged when there is no law, is it? [14] Yes, but Death reigned from Adam to Moses [and therefore there was law], also over those who did not sin in the form of the rebellion of Adam." (1987:174)

Paul is made to argue that before Moses the whole world was under the law, without either the "remedy" of the Torah for Jews (5:14) or God's act in Christ for Gentiles (5:16).

Though in Rom 7 there is some apology for the "law" in vv. 7-12, it is closely associated with the notion of "evil impulse" in the following section (vv. 13-25; cf. vv. 23,25 and, further, 8:2). But Gaston stresses that in the second half of the chapter Paul also makes positive statements concerning the law, which he takes as references to the Torah, which is spiritual (v. 14), good (v. 16), and of God (vv. 22,25). Gaston concludes that "when Paul is most negative about the law, he opposes it to—the law, that is, the Torah!" (1987:31). He would, of course, dismiss the presence of any autobiographical elements in Rom 7.

The clear distinction between "law" and "Torah" that Gaston attributes to Paul is, however, absent from the text itself. Though Gaston is not unwilling to admit this, his exegesis suffers under the weight of assumptions on two further questions. First, Gaston's interpretation identifies ontic function and ontology when it comes to Paul's view of the law. In Romans, instead of trying to vindicate the law through exegesis[21] (as one would expect him to do) or by distinguishing between an ontology of the law and its negative anthropological effect when brought into conjunction with sin,[22] he eliminates the tension and proposes two ontologies and two cor-

[21] This is Stendahl's approach; cf. his analysis of Rom 7 in "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" (1976:92f). This view is similar to that of Cranfield (1979:852f), who himself insists that "the law is not abrogated by Christ": "we should always . . . be ready to reckon with the possibility that Pauline statements, which at first sight seem to disparage the law, were really directed not against the law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we now have a convenient terminology."

[22] So Beker (1980:105). Räisänen (1983:18) does not refer to this distinction.

responding functions. Even if such a distinction were clear in Paul's mind, it would be precarious to assume that his readers were just as sophisticated and would have understood νόμος in these specific ways. Thus if Paul had any interest in communicating in a context where the basis of his mission was being called into question, it is difficult to explain why he would have appealed to implicit categories within one word at critical points of his letter (Gal 3 and 4).[23]

Second, Gaston's caricature of Paul's thought as Gentile-oriented makes allowance for an almost inflexible theology that cannot vary according to the specific occasions surrounding each of the letters. Thus the possibility that Paul can view the law both positively (Romans) and negatively (Galatians) in connection with the same figure of Abraham is not even raised. It is begging the question to insist that a bifurcated conception of νόμος could explain such a difference. A more satisfactory approach is to search for a reason in the different circumstances or Paul or his readers underlying the two letters (e.g., Beker 1980:94-108), which—though unable to explain Paul's positive and negative statements in one letter—does introduce a category for exegesis that cannot be ignored. It is not within the scope of this article to critique Gaston's reconstruction of Jewish thought contemporary to Paul. Methodologically, Gaston's efforts to find alternative explanations by illuminating an early Jewish background are commendable. But he is so eager to apply his history-of-religion paradigms to Paul's thought that one wonders whether or not the principle of analogy has been substituted for the pains of internal analysis. While few would deny that such a procedure is not new to biblical scholarship, Gaston's exegesis is thereby unable to interact seriously with other exegetical possibilities.

[23] Gaston (1987:43) attributes Paul's lack of clarity with νόμος to (1) the absence of further vocabulary for making such a distinction and (2) to Paul's conviction that God is one and, despite the law's different functions in relation to Jews and Gentiles, the νόμος must be essentially one. It is difficult, however, to see how these explanations can account for a view that allows for co-existing, separate "patterns of religions" which Gaston attributes to Paul.

Until now attention has been focused on Gaston's reconstruction of Paul's thought as it concerns the Gentiles. By way of summary, any negative statements Paul makes about the law ought, for Gaston, to assume the following: (1) such assertions refer to problems of Gentiles for whom Christ is the means for entry into God's covenant; (2) Paul's view of Judaism and the Torah is continuous with Jewish self-understanding as reflected in the literature of the Second Temple and rabbinic periods. Both assumptions, however, are paradigmatic. Though Gaston's essays are well documented and leave the impression that he has engaged in a thorough study of the Pauline texts, they are imposed as rigid patterns upon the text without leaving adequate room for tensions within Paul's thought in relation to Jews and Gentiles.

## 2. PAUL AND ISRAEL

The above discussion has described some ways Gaston has tried to show that Paul, in his concern for Gentile problems, never opposes Judaism *per se*. For Gaston, however, this does not mean that Paul had nothing against many of his Jewish contemporaries. Gaston (1987:135-150) devotes one essay to delineating "Israel's Misstep in the Eyes of Paul." He sums up his assessment of the problem with a reformulation of Sanders' thesis[24]: "This is what Paul finds wrong with other Jews: that they did not share his revelation in Damascus" (1987:140), i.e., his call as an apostle to the Gentiles. Again, Paul's mission to the Gentiles, considered in exclusive terms, provides Gaston the interpretive key.

In line with Stendahl, Gaston emphasizes that Paul's "conversion" was actually a call in which Paul realized that God's righteousness was being extended through Christ to the nations (Is 49:6).[25] A corollary of this change in Paul's perspective was his disappointment that other Jews, except for a few of his co-workers,

[24] Cf. note 2 above.

[25] Gaston discounts the testimony of Acts and speculates that an apposite setting for Paul's ἀποκάλυψις and commissioning (Gal 1:15f) would be "Paul all alone late at night pondering the text of the second Servant song" in Is 49:1-6 (1987:79).

were continuing to lay exclusive claim to Israel's status as God's people. Since God has opened up a new way for Gentiles—albeit one attested in the law and prophets (Rom 3:21)—Paul considers Jewish proselytism an unnecessary enterprise.[26] At the heart of Paul's sorrow (Rom 9:1-3), then, lies Israel's exclusivism. Israel has refused to recognize that salvation will come to the Gentiles. In Gaston's reading, Rom 9:30–10:4 is to be interpreted accordingly: "Israel, . . . in pursuing the Torah of righteousness [for Israel alone] did not attain to [the goal of] the Torah" (1987:178).

One of Gaston's most unusual interpretations has to do with the problem of the Jewish remnant (1987:142). The ἐκλογή of Rom 11:7 does not have anything to do with Jewish Christians. Indeed, this definition of the remnant would undermine Gaston's reconstruction since it implies the non-validity of Judaism outside of Christ.[27] The inflexible way Gaston's paradigm is applied to Paul forces him to argue that the "election" must refer to those Jews who, like Paul (Rom 11:1f), are engaged in the mission to the Gentiles.[28]

### 3. PAUL AND JEWISH CHRISTIANS

In his analysis of Romans 9–11, Gaston refrains from seeing any allusions to Jewish Christians. Throughout Gaston's essays, their significance for Paul's theology is portrayed as minimal, if at all, whether it means that Paul drew upon traditions they preserved or that he reacted negatively to their opposition. In fact, Jewish Christians constitute somewhat of an enigma in a scheme con-

[26] Cf. note 13 above.

[27] Rom 9:6b is also interpreted away from a remnant theme: Gaston argues that not all those outside of Israel (ἐξ Ισραήλ are Israel, that is, Gentiles and apostates do not belong to Israel (1987:94, 218 n. 77). In her important critique of Gaston's exegesis, Johnson (1989:194f) rightly observes that a reading of the sense of ἔξω into ἐκ violates the natural sense of the preposition. Furthermore, according to Gaston's reading, οὐ πιάντες is read as a Semitic construction (לא... כל = "none"), thereby eliminating any sense of a reduction (election from a larger group) which accords better with the context (vv. 6-13).

[28] Gaston identifies the "election" (= Paul and Jewish co-workers) with the "vessels of mercy" in Rom 9:23. This identification, however, does not help substantiate his thesis, since the next verse specifies to whom the vessels refer: some from (ἐξ) the Gentiles as well as from the Jews (v. 24).

cerned with a dual-covenant theology with two separate means of "getting in."

Yet Paul does indicate, both explicitly and implicitly, his relationship with the Jerusalem church. In the account of the Jerusalem conference in Gal 2:1-10, two gospels (v. 7) and two apostolates (v. 9) are agreed upon for Jews and Gentiles respectively. Furthermore, in Rom 15:27 (cf. Gal 2:10) Paul emphasizes that the collection for "the saints" in Jerusalem is appropriate because the Gentiles have become partakers of their spiritual things. Finally, Paul draws upon Jewish Christian tradition throughout his letters: e.g., 1 Cor 11:23b-25; 15:3-7; Rom 1:3f; 3:24-26a; 4:25; 10:9b. Gaston (1987:114f) stresses how different this tradition is from Paul's thought, but also admits attention to Paul's claim that what they and he preach is essentially the same (1 Cor 15:11).

Whatever one makes of Paul's relationship with the Jerusalem church, Gaston does not find any significant role in Paul's own theology for a Jewish Christian community:

> "The logic of Paul's theology is such as to make Jewish Christianity only a transitional period. . . . The theology of the Jerusalem church had, of course, no future and certainly cannot be revived today [sic!], while the theology of Paul triumphed to such an extent that it is only with difficulty that the theology of Jerusalem can be recovered." (1987:79.115)

While it may indeed be difficult to reconstruct a theology (or theologies) of first-century Jewish Christianity, it is apposite to observe that Gaston's assessment of Paul's attitude toward them is right only if Paul does not identify "the remnant" with Jewish Christians in Rom 11, an interpretation which is very unlikely. On the other hand, if Paul does have a Jewish Christian remnant in mind in Rom 9:6b.24 and 11:1ff., then the existence of Jewish Christians provides a crucial link in his argument concerning the faithfulness of God to Israel.

## IV. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

### 1. THE TORAH AND ISRAEL

As the title of Gaston's volume of essays indicates, Paul's relevance for Jewish-Christian dialogue is placed in his understanding of the Torah. Gaston presupposes that a positive assessment of the Torah in Paul also suggests an equivalent to a positive treatment of Israel as the people of God. But how interwoven are these themes? The Gospel of Matthew, for instance, can treat the Jewish law in terms of continuity and fulfillment of promise, while the blame for Jesus' crucifixion is placed on the Jewish "people" (cf. Mt 27:25). Such a distinction is nowhere more evident than in Romans 9–11. Is it not possible, then, that Paul can speak about Christ as "the end of the law" in that section of Romans where he insists that God has not rejected God's people (11:1)?[29]

Gaston would relate Paul's grief and sorrow in Rom 9:2 to the Jews' unwillingness to have their identity as God's elect people extended to the Gentiles. If Paul otherwise had a clear understanding that there are different acceptable ways for Jews and Gentiles for "staying in" and "getting in" respectively, then his own disappointment (as Gaston would have it), which is expressed more clearly here than anywhere else in his letters, becomes hard to explain.

Thus Gaston's thought may be aptly characterized with the expression "I'm OK, you're OK," because it diminishes Paul's anguish concerning differences between his mission to the Gentiles and the "non-Christian" Jewish community. In a similar way, traditional interpretations do not allow for a logical tension in Paul's thought whenever they argue for a replacement theology, a view which, for the sake of comparison, may be phrased as "I'm OK, you're not OK." In both construals Paul is made as having all the theological answers to the problems of continuity and discontinuity of Israel and the Christian church, while his struggle is confined to an existential level. There seems to be a growing awareness that

[29] Cf., for instance, Beker (1990:66-68).

Rom 9–11 arise out of present personal and theological uncertainties (cf. Sanders 1983: 197f): "I'm not OK, you're not OK." In these chapters neither the presence of the church and the Jewish Christian remnant (according to traditional interpreters: 9:7-27; 11:1ff.) nor the assertion of Israel's status as God's chosen people (e.g., Gaston) can entirely resolve the matter for Paul: "on account of the gospel, [they are] enemies for your sake, but on account of election, [they are] beloved" (11:28). Instead, he is compelled to appeal to a "mystery," i.e. a salvation of "all Israel" which depends upon the eschatological activity of a righteous and faithful God.

## 2. EXEGESIS AND THEOLOGY

It is hard to sketch Gaston's construal of Paul while taking into account the caution that accompanies many of his conclusions. Indeed, Gaston does not claim that his interpretation is without problems. He simply accepts as a truism that no one interpretation of Paul is completely right. Therefore, if through an "experimental hermeneutic" he can find a *possible* explanation that runs counter to the traditional ones posed, he has won an equally plausible exegetical base for his own reflections on Jewish-Christian relations.

And yet, it has hopefully been sufficiently demonstrated that Gaston's construal of Paul's thought is a good example of how a theological perspective can influence one's exegesis of a text. An overview of his exegesis reveals a consistent effort to cast the text in a predetermined and unpliable mold. Gaston, as already noted, is aware of the post-Holocaust context of his work, but the question he asks is whether this context can awaken new sensitivities that can shed further light on our understanding of biblical tradition in its original context.

Gaston's work claims to allow the descriptive task of exegesis an integrity of its own. Yet his particular interpretation of Paul has such an immediate significance for the current ecumenical discussions that the differences between Paul's time and a contemporary

issue are, in effect, glossed over.[30] For all practical purposes, his point of departure *is* the post-Holocaust situation. This is particularly clear when we broadly consider the irony of Gaston's historical reconstruction: when it comes to a dual-covenant theological scheme—a notion that presupposes considerable reflection *after* the separation of two religious groups—it seems odd that one would try to find it expressed during a time when Christianity had not yet gained a fully independent identity from Judaism. In the end, then, we are left with the impression that Gaston's work on Paul, in its framework, appears to be both exegetically strained and historically implausible.

But what about Gaston's theological agenda? Ought the tenuousness of exegetical conclusions be allowed to invalidate his theological stance? Gaston certainly cannot be faulted more than most exegetes who, in one way or another, are almost inevitably guilty of anachronistic exegesis. When considered from another angle, however, Gaston's appeal to exegesis opens up an important correlation between Paul's own situation and recent Jewish-Christian dialogue. It seems that Gaston's social context is not so much the activity of the church in doing theology for itself, but the church in its uncertain relationship with Judaism, for which some analogy can be recognized already in texts of the New Testament. Just as there is an inherent unclarity in a community so defined, it should not surprise us if a similar ambiguity exists among critical readers of Gaston, who nevertheless are empathetic to his theological concerns. Consequently, an expectation that his exegesis should primarily address either the church's own confessional self-understanding within the world at large or, for that matter, the struggles of Judaism, to account for an existence in both religious and polit-

[30] A similar ambivalence is evident in the work of Stendahl. For instance, in an article on "Biblical Theology, Contemporary" (1962:418-432), he emphasizes the "competitive nature" between "what the text meant" and "what the text means." In Gablerian fashion, a historical-critical analysis is intended to protect the exegetical process from an invasion of theological presuppositions. At the same time (1976), however, he lays stress on Paul's original intent, by which he seeks to critique traditional approaches through a theological perspective of his own (cf. esp. pp. 35-37).

ical spheres cannot do justice to Gaston's own social context in which the community is a community of dialogue. The circle is drawn beyond the confines of the church, and the documents are not only viewed from the perspective of Christian faith. Hence an appraisal of Gaston's theological approach will be commensurate with the extent and nature of his readers' own participation in this community. Within this social paradigm one culls the biblical texts in a quest for meaning; and this activity is understandable. In terms of religious life, the texts of the past can legitimately be said to attest to a discussion between dialogue partners who, despite a relationship of often tragic dimensions, remain in dialogue today.

But to derive meaning from an "authoritative" text is more than an activity of application, accommodation or *eisegesis*. It should also be aware that what a text means might not always coincide with what it once meant, no matter how much continuity between present and past may beckon from the horizon. Now Gaston's essays assume a close relationship between exegesis and theology, and his reflections would have us value an approach that resembles a "hermeneutical circle": a line drawn from the present to the past interfacing with a line from the past to the present. When Gaston reconstructs Paul's theology, however, a mutual, corrective interaction between these parameters is wanting: what the text meant is not allowed to modify the claims that are brought to it.

I conclude this article by expressing the hope that Paul will remain an important figure for discussions between Jews and Christians. Scholars and participants in these dialogues are always going to have different ways of working their respective positions in relation to Paul's thought. Yet, what one concludes about Paul on the basis of exegesis does not exhaust the manner of his significance. With respect to the existence of synagogues and churches, Pauline theology reflects a tension, which Paul could not fully resolve without acknowledging an open future and the righteousness of God. Though we can be certain that the plurality of interpretations of Paul will persist, his struggle to maintain God's faithfulness in the midst of an ever-increasing social and theological discontinuity reminds the Christians of the reality of their own

uncertainties, whether or not they choose to participate in ecumenical dialogue with Jews. Paul's theocentric and future-oriented solution also reminds us that these uncertainties are not without meaning.

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# Book Reviews

*Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care*. By Donald Capps. Augsburg Fortress, 1990, 195 pages.

One of the secret complaints of graduate students in pastoral theology is that the books we find most exciting and challenging are often written by scholars outside of our own field. And there is a good reason for this: most publications in pastoral theology are written for chaplains, pastors and congregations, and are therefore focused on practical issues of church and parish life. But we sometimes feel a lack in the areas of methodology and theory (and, let's be honest, of books about which we can become passionate in the cafeteria).

*Reframing* by Donald Capps is one of those unusual volumes written for pastors and practitioners that also provides good "fightin' material" for graduate student lunchers. Capps' concern is that the most influential current models of pastoral care (the "shepherd" who guides and the "wounded healer" who empathizes) often prove inadequate to the tasks for which they are needed. *Reframing* is his effort to introduce a new "method and technique" to the repertoire of pastoral caregivers; one which he feels is based both in modern psychotherapeutic theory and in biblical "forms, experiences, and ideas."

Capps draws heavily on the work of Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland and Richard Fisch of the Brief Therapy Center of the

Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California and their ground-breaking book *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* (1974). Reframing is the method that has become most closely associated with their work. According to Watzlawick, et al., reframing means changing "the conceptual and/or emotional setting or viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced" in order to "place it in another frame which fits the 'facts' of the same concrete situation equally well or even better. . . ." The purpose of reframing is to change the "meaning attributed to the situation, and therefore its consequences, but not its concrete facts. . . ." (*Change*, p. 95).

One of the most important features of the theory of reframing as outlined by Capps in chapter 1 is its focus on change. For Watzlawick, et al., there are two levels of change: "**First-order change** that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged; and **second-order change** that alters the system itself" (*Reframing*, p. 12). An often-cited example of the difference between first and second-order change is the experience of having a nightmare: dreamers can run, freeze, hide, jump, scream, etc. in the dream (first-order change), or they can wake up and move to a new state of being (second-order change) and truly escape the traumas of the nightmare (*Change*, p. 10). The techniques of reframing are directed toward effecting these second-order type changes.

Another important feature of reframing for Capps is its attention to paradox. A therapeutic intervention which attempts to solve difficulties at the wrong level (e.g., a first-order solution attempted when a second-order change needed, or vice versa) is called a paradox. Capps argues, our lives are also fundamentally paradoxical—including our notions of God. Embracing and celebrating paradox in an intentional manner is one means of effecting powerful second-order changes.

In support of his argument regarding paradox Capps draws upon the parables of Jesus showing how Jesus used a technique of paradoxical intention (among others) to effect healing (chapter 3). He also draws on the story of Job (chapters 6 and 7) describing

how God's nature is revealed to be paradoxical, and how Job's view of himself was challenged by God's paradoxical responses to his accusations.

*Reframing* raises controversial issues on at least two fronts: first in the techniques it promotes (which are hotly debated in the field of systems therapy), and second in the critique Capps poses to the most well-accepted techniques of pastoral care as it is currently practiced.

Reframing has had a stormy reception in the therapeutic community; and for the most part this criticism has focused on technique rather than theory. Capps devotes the second chapter of *Reframing* to a description and discussion of various techniques employed by reframers. These include such relatively noncontroversial tactics as 'relabeling' ("giving a different name to behavior and attitudes than the one the counselee has applied to them") and 'advertising instead of concealing' ("[i]nstead of trying to conceal the symptom [such as fear of public speaking] the client makes it known"). But they also include techniques which may be interpreted as manipulative and deceptive: 'confusion' (in which a therapist makes a deliberately confusing statement so that "the client will be more likely to respond positively to the therapist's following statement") and giving 'the illusion of alternatives' (where a therapist creates the "illusion that the other has an alternative"). These kinds of techniques have led critics of reframing to characterize it as unethical and worse.

Capps is not unaware of this concern. While he admits that these techniques might be used wrongly (and ineffectively) by "overenthusiastic or irresponsible" therapists, Capps argues that not only are these techniques *not* unethical (in and of themselves), but they were used by Jesus in his teaching and healing and by God in God's dialogue with Job.

The second front on which this book will raise controversy is with those in the field of pastoral theology. In the introduction to this book Capps is careful to point out that he is not interested in replacing current models; his purpose is to augment them. However, it is fairly clear, especially in his chapters on Job, that he finds

them inadequate, based on bad theology, and only capable of producing first-order change. Capps likens Job's three counselors, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who have traditionally been seen as "bad" counselors, are likened to modern (1) supportive, (2) crisis, and (3) ethical, value, and meaning counselors. He argues that in cases like Job's a supportive counselor (Eliphaz) would not be able to accept, or help the client express, deep feelings of anger or mistrust in God. A crisis counselor (Bildad) would not take into account the damage the crisis has done to a counselee's self-perception. And the ethical, value, and meaning counselor (Zophar) is inadequate in providing guidance for alleviating the effects of dehumanization. These comparisons will be disturbing to the pastoral care community which has, itself traditionally leveled harsh critiques against Job's counselors. Perhaps this is Capps' attempt to use paradox in diagnosing problems in his own field. In any case, it is certainly a bold reframing—the effectiveness of which can only be measured by the extent to which pastoral caregivers see themselves in Capps' portrayals of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

I feel that *Reframing* is an extremely valuable addition to the field of pastoral theology (for pastors and graduate students) and a good introduction to the theory and techniques of reframing. It should—unless I miss my guess—provide fuel for good discussions in the cafeteria!

— PATRICIA HOWERY DAVIS

*Darwinism and the Divine in America: Protestant Intellectual and Organic Evolution, 1859-1900.* By Jon H. Roberts. University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, 339 pages.

Jon H. Roberts offers an analytical overview of the discussions about the theory of organic evolution among nineteenth-century Protestant intellectuals. This monograph won the Brewer Prize, awarded by the American Society of Church History in 1985.

Beginning with Charles Darwin's *Origins of the Species* (1859), Roberts outlines the Protestant intellectual response to this work.

Darwin's hypothesis rejected the traditional assumption of the fixity and special creation of each specie. In its place, he proposed the gradual and naturalistic principle of descent with modification by natural selection. Darwin still gave God credit for impressing these governing laws into the universe. Maybe most importantly, Darwin remained silent on the special creation of humanity. In short, "Darwin was challenging a vision of natural history that had become fundamental to the way most religious thinkers conceived of the relationship between the organic work and its Creator. For this reason, in the period between 1859 to 1875 they characteristically assumed that the Darwinian hypothesis was an assault on 'the fundamental principles both of natural and revealed religion' " (p. 7).

In this sixteen-year period, the response of the American intellectuals to Darwin's work was motivated by a desire to reject the theological implications of the work. This was done by rejecting the thesis as scientifically untenable. Most Protestants assumed a "concord of truth" existed between natural religion (science) and the revealed religion of the Bible. While science operated on naturalistic assumptions, it did so in a way which did not conflict with traditional Protestant theology. Science was revered for revealing the existence and working of the traditional nineteenth-century theology's God in the natural order. Most Protestant intellectuals were committed to Baconian methodology in both science and theology. Darwin was thus challenged on scientific grounds, and it was simply a matter of time until science proved that the transmutation thesis lacked empirical evidence.

By 1875, however, a quiet revolution had taken place. Most intellectuals had made their peace with Darwin. James Dwight Dana of Yale and James McCosh of Princeton, for example, harmonized the transmutation theory with a theistic view of evolution; of course, they still took exception to the anti-supernatural elements of the theory.

After 1875, most theologians paid less attention to the scientific arguments against Darwinism and concerned themselves more with its theological implications. The denial of the special creation

of humanity not only challenged the received interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, but also cast doubts on the doctrine of the Fall and the traditional moral theology which was built upon the twin assumptions of a universal moral law and individual "moral sense."

Roberts next surveys of the various theological responses to organic evolution. Some simply defended the traditional positions against Darwinism. Others tried to harmonize the new science with theology. Still others took advantage of the dilemma to reformulate Christianity along the lines of German idealism.

One major problem for theologians was the concept of biblical revelation, and a variety of responses were offered. For example Princeton geologist Arnold Guyot argued that the theory of organic evolution and the biblical narrative of creation were compatible because the order of creation described in Genesis corresponded to that of the scientific investigation. Others, like the New Theology's advocate Theodore T. Munger, held that the Bible did not convey an accurate scientific account of natural history. This latter position resulted in changes in the concept of biblical inspiration and inerrancy and some of the key doctrines of traditional nineteenth-century orthodoxy. Theology was reformulated in evolutionary terms.

Roberts concludes with a chapter on the continuing opposition to the theory of organic evolution. In contrast to David Livingstone, George Marsden, and others, Roberts argues that this opposition stems less from a commitment to Baconian inductionism and Common Sense philosophy and more from the alleged incompatibility of evolution with the veracity of the Bible. In the end, such opposition meant that the conservative theologians were rejecting part of the established corpus of scientific thought. This rejection destroyed the alliance between science and theology which had existed for over a century. Such a rejection, however, was made by only a minority of the Protestant intellectual community.

This work presents a helpful survey of the Darwinian discussion. Roberts's argument for the shift in opposition between the two periods, from scientific to theological grounds and the corresponding attempts to repudiate, harmonize or reformulate traditional

theology in the face of the widespread acceptance of organic evolution by the scientific community is compelling.

There are, however, three criticisms worth mentioning. First, Roberts does not make clear how much support each position enjoyed, and the vagueness is confusing to the reader. Some sort of fluid but paradigmatic structure would have made the arguments easier to follow. Secondly, Roberts does not address the role that denominational affiliation and theology might have played in the various responses to the Darwinian challenge. The strict confessionalism of the Princeton Theology, for example, probably inclined them to a defensive posture more quickly than the advocates of Andover's New Theology. Such concerns are not incidental. Thirdly, at times Roberts glosses over major differences of opinion within certain positions. For example, Roberts argues that Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and B. B. Warfield all opposed Darwinism because it not only undermined the traditional natural theology arguments from design but also because it was atheistic. He dismisses variations among them as minor. But Warfield as a theistic evolutionist and in stark contrast to both Hodges, argued that evolution was the divine *modus operandi.* He completely reinterpreted Genesis 1 and 2 accordingly. Roberts' oversimplification here casts doubt on his use of sources.

These three criticisms notwithstanding, Roberts's work does make a valuable contribution to the historiography of Darwinism in American Protestant thought.

— P.C. KEMENY

*Christian Theology: An Ecumenical Approach. 2 vols.* By Thomas N. Finger. Vol. I, Herald Press, 1985. 367 pages. Vol. II, Herald Press, 1989. 544 pages.

Every now and then someone writes what may be the rarest of books, a textbook that makes an original contribution. The two volumes of Thomas Finger's eschatological approach to systematic theology are designed to meet this difficult task (I, p. 9), and in most respects his work is successful.

Finger, a former Presbyterian who is now an ordained Mennonite minister teaching at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, has written one of the first systematic theologies from a believer's church perspective, and his work represents a significant attempt to recast systematic theology into an eschatological framework. Finger's eschatological approach is a method of inquiry based on the early Christian conviction that the "last things" had already occurred through Jesus, even though their effects were not yet fully realized. By treating every doctrine of Christian theology in light of this conviction, Finger hopes to overcome the abstruseness which has distanced traditional systematic theology from the life of the church.

Volume I develops Finger's argument for a new approach to theology and includes a discussion of eschatology, revelation, and the Work of Christ. According to Finger, there are two poles which lie at the heart of all theological reflection: (1) the kerygmatic pole, which is a basic message grounded in specific historical events, and (2) the contextual pole, which is the orderly communication of this message in different ways appropriate to various times and cultures. Theological approaches can be classified according to which of the poles receives the greater emphasis. Kerygmatic theologies tend to emphasize the transcendent and unique Word of God which radically challenges and changes human beings and all created existence. Examples of this approach include Calvin, believer's churches, Charles Hodge, and Karl Barth. The weakness of kerygmatic theologies is that they often fail to show concretely how the divine reality is related to other dimensions of reality. Contextual theologies tend to be insightful analyzers of contemporary life and keep the Christian message alive and relevant. Examples of this approach include Aquinas, Schleiermacher, Bultmann, and current liberation theologians. The weakness of contextual theologies is that they may adapt so well to their current situation by identifying with a particular movement that they run the risk of losing a perspective from which to be self-critical.

Finger's eschatological approach is an attempt to get around the impasse created by the overemphasis of one pole over the other.

In contrast to kerygmatic theologies, which start with God and reason by deduction, and to contextual theologies, which start with humanity and reason by induction, Finger starts with eschatology and reasons by adduction, or the use of models. (For readers not familiar with the approach Finger is advocating, see Ian Barbour's *Myths, Models, and Paradigms* for an excellent explanation.) Because eschatology lies at a point between the two poles, it provides a starting point for systematic theology which overcomes the problems associated with the two traditional approaches.

Finger's new starting point results in a variation on the traditional ordering of systematic theology. Finger starts where traditional theology ends (eschatology) and concludes where traditional theology begins (doctrine of God). Eschatology also provides the means for understanding the relationships among specific Christian doctrines. For example, eschatology deals with things hoped for and the hope those things arouse. Chapter 7 explores the relationship of these objective and subjective dimensions. Included in this discussion is an attempt to make eschatology intelligible to modern thinkers by appealing to recent developments in modern science. Chapters 8–9 discuss the coming events which arouse eschatological hope.

From the future Finger moves to the present and takes up the question of how God is known, or revelation. Revelation is claimed to have three dimensions: the personal (chapter 10), the historical (chapter 11), and the propositional (chapter 12). General revelation is discussed in chapter 13.

The three dimensions of revelation each point to a Revealer, Jesus Christ. Finger discusses the work of Christ before his person, once again altering the traditional order. Chapter 14 gives an overview of various christological perspectives. Christ's life is discussed in chapter 15 and his death in chapters 16 and 17. Volume I closes with a discussion of Jesus' resurrection (chapter 18), and Finger's concluding remarks on the meaning of the resurrection are of particular interest (pp. 364-367).

Volume II opens with a discussion of anthropology, for Jesus is

both the revelation of God and what humans ought to be. Finger first outlines traditional and contemporary anthropologies (chapters 1–2), then moves to a discussion of his own Christological approach (chapters 3–4), and concludes with a discussion of the body-soul problem (chapter 5).

Sin is discussed in light of what human nature ought to be in chapter 6, and it is followed by justification (chapter 7) and sanctification (chapter 8). Sanctification leads to a discussion of the community which helps to bring it about, namely the church. Finger begins with some general remarks on the nature of the church (chapter 9) and then discusses the church as a community of fellowship (chapter 10), its mission in society and to non-Christians (chapters 11–12), and its worship (chapter 13). Chapter 14 treats the structure of the church, which Finger finds to be secondary to its mission.

Having discussed God's works, Finger closes with a discussion of the doctrine of God. Chapter 15 treats the "Persons" of the Spirit and the Son. Chapter 16 considers the Trinity's historic work, including creation. The eternal character of the Trinity and the nature of the Son are developed in chapter 17, and the nature and attributes of God conclude Finger's systematic theology in chapter 18.

Finger's text is well documented and researched, containing excellent Scripture, author, and subject indexes along with bibliographies at the end of each chapter. Beginning students of theology would find it a helpful reference and intermediate students could use it for a quick review.

This book would be an excellent introductory text for beginning theology students from believer's church backgrounds, and students from other traditions could also use it with profit. Advanced students and specialists will find Finger's ordering of systematic theology intriguing, and his treatment of specific doctrines will spur further thinking as there are plenty of ideas to debate.

— S. BRIAN STRATTON

*Faith on Earth.* By H. Richard Niebuhr, edited by Richard R. Niebuhr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. 123 pages.

*Faith on Earth* is a collection of, unfinished notes of the late H. Richard Niebuhr, not intended for publication, edited by his son Richard R. Niebuhr. I am inclined to agree with the editor that *Faith on Earth* does give us an insight into what may be the most central theme of Niebuhr's prolific career (p. ix). The goal of the book is an inquiry into the meaning of faith under the crisis of faith in American intellectual, religious and political culture.

Although some have "characterized" these notes as a phenomenology of faith (p. ix), they are not simply a descriptive account of a certain phenomenon called faith. The normative element in the book is too strong to warrant such a simple description. Niebuhr has both an implicit and an explicit insistence upon the virtue of faithfulness as the right way to order human life within the structure of religious faith. Yet, there is something of a phenomenology going on in the book. Niebuhr does provide us with an account of faith through the analysis of its forms and structure.

The problem of faith is not merely a theological problem, but also a socio-political problem:

> "Questions about faith arise in an urgent and tragic form as we view massive and petty breaches of faith—treasons, lying propaganda, the cultivation of mutual distrust in massive party and national policy, the use of pretended loyalty in conspiracies against State and civilization, the enlistment of men as faithful followers of causes that depend for success on practices of deception." (p. 1)

Niebuhr's method for understanding faith is dialectic. Trust or belief in God and faithfulness among persons are placed in relationship to distrust and faithlessness among persons (p. 2). The dialectic between faith as trust and loyalty and disbelief and infidelity becomes the basic interpretive condition by which to inter-

nally understand the history of the Christian's inquiry into faith. Moreover, it externally informs the history of criticism against Christian faith by persons from Celsus to Nietzsche (p. 2f).

Bracketing those meanings of faith which are particularly subjective and individualistic, Niebuhr defines the structure of faith as basically social. Believing is best defined as trust in another person or authority (p. 55). Therefore, it is not immediate but mediated (p. 57). By defining faith on a social and inter-subjective basis, *Faith on Earth* becomes a critique of faith on earth (p. 57f) and can be read as a critique of social faith (p. 60) since knowing is social, believing is social and doubting is social (p. 61).

With these methodological decisions, Niebuhr seeks to avoid both solipsism and determinism. To embrace either of these, he must be prepared to surrender moral judgments and criticisms from his study. Moral judgments and criticism of faith can be posed only if the structure of faith is morally significant, that is, socially reflexive and responsive. Thus for Niebuhr, faith is inherently moral.

Niebuhr interprets faith as a triadic structure which was the structural key in his earlier book *The Responsible Self* (1961). The glue of this structure is the covenant between believers and the self on a common object of trust and distrust, the object being something beyond both the community of believers and the believing self. The believing self (1), in the context of church/scriptures (2), is oriented to a third order that stands as an objective other than (1) and (2). For the Christian church, that other is God (pp. 77ff). Trust in those relationships of agreements and loyalty to those agreements in the exercise of selfhood are essential (p. 89).

Through a parallel analysis of various forms of social groups and relationships—community, association and family—Niebuhr applies the triadic structure of faith to the religious community. Faith in a religious community does not refer to external or logically intrinsic goods of our various socio-political communities. Rather, the structure of faith is expansive. The transcendent cause is absolute and universal in form, as a Being or the ground of being that obligates and demands trust and unites us in a universal

a belief system that conforms to the triadic structure. Its theology particularly stresses the importance of covenant, and thus he attempts to reinterpret it from a radical covenantal structure which is triadic rather than bipolar. In his reconstruction of theology, Niebuhr finds two doctrines particularly instructive for his claims: the doctrines of sin and trinity.

Sin is distrust in the transcendent other. It is fundamentally the life of infidelity which results in the disordering of the triadic relationship expressed in an attitude of distrust and hostility toward the transcendent other due to the self's perceptions of that other's breaking promises on which the agreement of the community coheres and on which the fundamental conditions of loyalty are established (pp. 123-125). Sin is, then, the disordering of the most basic structure of faith. It is not objective but inter-subjective. Because of sin, the self is an alienated self: "we live as selves by faith but our faith is prevented and we with it" (p. 144). What is necessary for the continuity of the self is a new covenant by which the interpersonal relations of the triadic structure of faith centers in the "person" of Jesus Christ.

"Person" is an important notion when Niebuhr applies his triadic concept to the doctrine of trinity. By its use, Niebuhr signifies that Jesus is not an object but is "personality" who is present not so much as memory, nor as a mystical alter-ego, but as a person among persons, as acknowledged companion (p. 151). Christ exists in faith, the triadic structure of trust and loyalty, not as an idea but as a person (p. 160f). His relation to God is paradigmatic of this structure (p. 162). Where disbelief and hostility control the life of broken faith, Jesus brings to remembrance God's powerful goodness.

In Niebuhr's social analogy of the trinity as descriptive of the life of faith (p. 177f), God is a Being with the inner reality of selfhood, covenanting and keeping faith (p. 179). Jesus is "the inner personal companion" (p. 180f) who as person is present in the memory and expectation of the believer. Spirit is the attribute of the two persons in the Godhead and makes it possible for us to be selves with them: it is the unity of "our spirit" with the father and

the son which constitutes the triadic structure of faith (p. 181). The community of faith, a community of trust and loyalty, is the interpersonal structure of covenant. God's cause is the cause of all, so that the moral obligation of all is to treat every person as a "kingdom of ends." For Niebuhr, this conception of the Trinity is the ground of hope and trust under conditions of broken promises and infidelity.

*Faith on Earth* allows for many variant readings. It could be read as a "Fundamental Theology" in the sense that it is a defense of theism primarily and Christian faith secondarily, or as a "Theology Proper" because it does give a delineation of Niebuhr's conception of God. The difficulty with *Faith on Earth* is that the descriptive, pejorative and constructive elements of criticism all seem to be confused. The value of the book, however, is not its coherence, not even its theology, but its method of analysis. The triadic structure of faith has proven itself informative in theological ethics and criticism today, and it is most helpful to gain further insights into the complexity and expansiveness of Niebuhr's religious and moral thinking.

— VICTOR ANDERSON

*Sex, Race and God: Christian Feminism in Black and White.* By Susan Thistlethwaite. Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989. 171 pages.

When a society is constructed out of multiple forms of violence, there will be those who are both beneficiary and victim, both oppressor and oppressed. The temptation in such a situation is to focus on one's role as oppressed, rather than as oppressor. And in fact, Marxism and other single-factor theories of social analysis feed such a temptation, because they do not account for multiple and interlocking levels of oppression. Thus white feminists tend to focus on our particular oppression as women, without seeing the implicit privilege that accrues to us because of our color and often our class. Furthermore, white women have repeated the mistake of white men, in assuming that our experience is universal, and in

attempting to bond with women of color on the basis of our "common" oppression.

This confession and acknowledgment is the starting point for Susan Thistlethwaite in *Sex, Race, and God*. She raises the question, "What happens when the differences between black and white women become the starting point for white feminist theology?" (p. 2) What follows is a rigorous attempt to turn white feminism's critical consciousness on itself, particularly on the race and class condition of white women, and to construct a theory of difference as a basis for feminist theology.

To accomplish these tasks, Thistlethwaite finds it necessary to make a methodological shift, which she outlines in chapter one. Feminist theory is usually developed as a corrective to patriarchal theories, which reflect the experience of " 'those men who are Western, bourgeois, white, and heterosexual' . . . feminists who share some of these characteristics, even when they are critically conscious of some of the limitations of these theories, may miss oppressive elements from other directions" (p. 14). This is true not only of liberal theories, but of poststructuralism. Poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault relativize the truth of experience so completely that they leave no grounds for absolute rejection of certain evils, for example, violence against women. Following Sandra Harding, Thistlethwaite argues that feminists need to be "conceptually unstable," correcting the limitations of one theory through use of others.

Thistlethwaite identifies two further methodological resources: anger, as "the energy that excites the hermeneutic of suspicion," and the criterion of truth-in-action. Anger provides the "passionate energy for the conflict that is so necessary in pursuit of changing the world rather than merely understanding it." Truth-in-action is profoundly communitarian:

> "The truth-in-action of the white women's movement in regard to race and class will or will not be found as white women seek to 'cover the backs' of black women, to find black women capable of their own self-defini-

tion, and to change their own practice and theory in light of that work." (p. 26)

Fiction by black women, supplemented by the "solid, unromantic data of the social science disciplines," is a major source for this work (p. 7). Thistlethwaite uses the writings of Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and others not only as a check on her own perceptions, but also as a source for creative reflection on sin and violence, on christology, and on the doctrine of God.

In chapter two, Thistlethwaite examines the historical differences between the experiences of white women and black women, from slavery to abolition, concluding with a critique of liberalism in the nineteenth century. In chapter three she extends this examination of difference by focussing on two experiences: housework and motherhood. There is little here which has not been treated before, in the writings of African-American women. Thistlethwaite uses this analysis to argue that what white women have considered "natural" is a condition which is shaped by class and economic conditions. These assumptions include the view of nature as unitary and harmonious, which need to be contrasted with black women's views of nature as "turned soggy by the blood of racism," with conflict built into the fabric of existence (p. 70).

The remainder of the book is an exploration of this insight, in which Thistlethwaite raises questions about the importance of the "tragic vision" (contrasted with "ideal vision") for creativity in human life. She hints at, but does not develop, a partial theodicy in the recognition that creativity often results from evil. Rather than working from an ontology of order, she proposes an ontology of struggle: "I believe there is *both* connection and destruction, creativity and evil at the heart of the cosmos" (p. 107).

Thistlethwaite argues that the unitary vision of reality needs to be destabilized through its most central symbols. The vision of an ordered reality has led to intolerance for diversity, which has in turn been the basis for the violence of Western patriarchal institutions. In the writings of black women, she finds the particularity of Jesus, in his suffering and identification with poverty, and the

emphasis on diversity in the Godhead. Finally, she finds an insistence that resurrection is found, not in the triumph of abstractions or ideas, but in survival through pain, and in the forthright knowledge of good and evil. These are the tools with which she proposes to revision a white, feminist, Christian theology.

The frustration with such a book is its brevity. There are important insights scattered like gems throughout, but in a single volume it is impossible to treat thoroughly the impact of the methodological shift Thistlethwaite proposes. Her insistence on difference and on an ontology of struggle cry out for further attention. Perhaps it is best to characterize this effort as a moment, a necessary moment, and look forward to further development as the struggle with difference and unity continues.

— KIMBERLY PARSONS CHASTAIN